

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE



*A Publication Concerned With  
Natural History and Conservation*

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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Publications Mail Registration # 09798

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs

## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

President

Michael Murphy

**Objectives of the Club:** To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse the information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

**Club Publications:** THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada, and TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, a quarterly providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on Club activities.

**Field Trips, Lectures** and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

**Membership Fees:** Individual (yearly) \$28    Sustaining (yearly) \$50  
Family (yearly) \$30    Life (one payment) \$500  
Benefactor \$500    Subscriptions to Trail & Landscape:  
(libraries and institutions): \$28 per year (volume)

Postage for U.S. and other foreign countries please add \$5

Single copies of recent issues: \$6 each postpaid

Index to Vols. 1 - 20: \$10 postpaid; to Vols. 21-25 \$5 postpaid.

**Membership application, correspondence:**

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Published by  
The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club  
Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2

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# Welcome New Members

## Ottawa Area

Daniel Brabant & family  
Karen Brown & family  
Chris Burns  
Ronald Daigle  
Erik Grzela  
Esther Hault  
Judith Ingles  
Josee Lemieux  
Charles Levesque  
Mr. & Mrs. Levesque  
Lucille Lasalle & Robin Lowe  
C. MacFabe & family  
Kirsten Miller  
Barbara Muller & family  
Harriet Outhet  
Justin Peter  
Jude Phillips  
Dieter Riedel & family  
Deanne Ryan & family  
Joey & Danielle Smith  
Jonas Weselake & family

## Other Areas

Nathan DeBruyn    Calgary AB

Dave Smythe  
Chair, Membership Committee  
February 2005

# “Golden Anniversary” Membership List 1935-2003

*Dave Smythe  
Membership Chair*

## Joined in

1935	J. E. V. Goodwill	Victoria BC
1936	W. H. Minshall	London ON
1942	R. Yorke Edwards	Victoria BC
1943	C. Stuart Houston	Saskatoon SK
1943	Mrs. Sheila Thomson	Ottawa ON
1946	J. M. Gillett	Nepean ON
1946	V. E. F. Solman	Ottawa ON
1947	W. J. Cody	Ottawa ON
1947	W. A. Fuller	Athabasca AB
1948	David Erskine	Willowdale ON
1948	Mrs. E. Frankton	Ottawa ON
1949	Henry H. Hildebrand	Corpus Christi TX
1950	H.G. Lumsden	Aurora ON
1951	E. L. Bousfield	Ottawa ON
1954	Yvonne & James Bendell	Clayton ON
1954	F. W. Munro	Kanata ON

Miss Mary Stuart, a member since 1944 and a friend to many Club members, passed away this year.

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# The 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Meeting

*Karen McLachlan Hamilton*

Traditionally, the Club's annual business meeting (ABM) is held at the January monthly meeting. Approximately 35 members attended this year's meeting held on 11 January 2005.

The evening began with an introduction by the Club President, Michael Murphy, and a review of the previous minutes. The Treasurer's report was given by Frank Pope, followed by the committee reports. Members were encouraged to ask questions and make suggestions. Many discussions over Club activities occurred.

The report from the Nominating Committee suggested the following list for the 2005 Council:

President	Michael Murphy
Vice President	vacant
Secretary	Susan Laurie Bourque
Treasurer	Frank Pope
Business Manager	Bill Cody
Editor CFN	Francis Cook
Editor T&L	Karen McLachlan Hamilton

## Committee Chairs:

Birds	Chris Trayner	FWG	David Hobden
Computers	Eleanor Zurbrigg	Macoun Rep	Diane Kitching
Conservation	Stan Rosenbaum	Membership	Dave Smythe
E & P	Gillian Marston	Publications	Ron Bedford
E & L	Fenja Brodo	ON Rep	Cendrine Huemer
Finance	Louise Schwartz		

The members at large are Kathy Conlan, Diane Lepage, Henry Steger and Diane Kitching. The Chairs not on Council include Irwin Brodo (Awards) and Rob Lee (Macoun). Fenja Brodo also chairs the Nominations Committee.

Barbara Gaertner and Christina Lewis are retiring from Council, but they are being replaced by Diane Kitching (new) and Eleanor Zurbrigg (returning).



Once the formal portion was complete, we ended the evening on a bitter-sweet note. Rob Lee, Chair of the Macoun Field Club, gave a pictorial tribute to a very special individual—Mary Stuart.

Anyone who has been involved with the Club for any length of time and certainly most (if not all) Macoun members know Mary for she has been involved with the Club and Club activities for more than 50 years. She will also remain synonymous with Packenham.

As a Centennial project Mary purchased an old farm near Packenham. Her land, all 600 acres, was littered with ponds, streams, lakes and floating bogs. It would be considered paradise to anyone who enjoys natural history. Over the years she shared her land with many Macoun members. And these visits were many. Through Mary's encouragement, her land became one of their field trips each month.

Rob showed pictures of kids enjoying the outings through several decades. He explained how many members learned valuable survival skills there and how easy it was for even the more experienced member to get lost. Ask any current member what ice is safe to walk on or what do you do when you see bear tracks or how old are those big pines.

Many past members (Rob included) feel that Mary's generosity in allowing them to explore and experience such a place has helped them become the people they are today. Sometime ask Rob about "roaming rights." Mary will be truly missed.

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## OFNC Committees for 2005

*Frank Pope*

The following OFNC committee members were approved by the Council at its meeting on February 21. Committee members may be added during the year as approved by the Council. The members listed below will operate your club in 2005. Committee chairs appear in bold letters with their telephone numbers. Should you have any questions, comments, complaints or compliments pertaining to the operations of a committee, or should you desire to serve on a committee, please give the chair a call or speak to a member of the relevant committee.

**AWARDS****Irwin Brodo (723-2054)**

Christine Hanrahan  
Bev McBride  
Eleanor Zurbrigg

**BIRDS****Chris Traynor  
(721-9197)**

Ken Allison  
Tony Beck  
Colin Bowen  
Daniel Brabant  
Janet Castle  
Marcel Gahbauer  
Christine Hanrahan  
Terry Higgins  
Bernie Ladouceur  
Christina Lewis  
Gordon Pringle  
Colin Selby  
Michael Tate  
Eve Ticknor

**BIRD RECORDS****(subcommittee)****Gordon Pringle (224-0543)**

Ken Allison  
Tony Beck  
Bruce Di Labio  
Marcel Gahbauer  
Mark Gawn  
Bob Gorman  
Paul Jones  
Bernie Ladouceur  
Christina Lewis  
Daniel St-Hilaire  
Michael Tate  
Chris Traynor

**COMPUTER  
MANAGEMENT****Eleanor Zurbrigg  
(224-8823)**

Sandy Garland  
Sandra Gushue  
Gregory Hutton  
Gordon Pringle  
James Sutton

**CONSERVATION****Stanley Rosenbaum  
(596-4288)**

Evelyne Boucher  
Lynne Bricker  
Christine Hanrahan  
David Hobden  
Philip Martin  
Frank Pope  
Dieter Riedel  
Adrianne Sinclair

**EDUCATION &  
PUBLICITY****Gillian Marston****(825-7248)**

John Cameron  
Kathy Conlan  
Betty Campbell  
Suzanne Deschenes  
Pearl Peterkin  
Ann Prescott  
Ona Spratt

**EXCURSIONS &  
LECTURES****Fenja Brodo (723-2054)**

Lee Cairnie  
Connie Clark  
Philip Jeffries  
Jeff Skevington  
Marilyn Ward

**FINANCE****Louise Schwartz  
(729-8609)**

Ron Bedford  
Bill Cody

Ann MacKenzie  
Frank Pope

**FLETCHER WILDLIFE  
GARDEN****David Hobden (521-4145)**

Charlie Clifford  
Colin Freebury  
Sandra Garland  
Jay Ladell  
Christine Hanrahan  
Henry Steger  
**Partner representative**  
Catherine Hooper

**MACOUN FIELD CLUB****Rob Lee (623-8123)**

Annie Belair  
Martha Camfield  
Barbara Gaertner  
Diane Kitching  
Jonathon Hickman  
Maryse Mahy  
Karen McKendrye

**MEMBERSHIP****Dave Smythe (592-3011)**

Verna Smythe  
Henry Steger  
Marilyn Ward

**NOMINATING****Fenja Brodo (723-2054)**

Frank Pope  
Eleanor Zurbrigg

**PUBLICATIONS****Ron Bedford (733-8826)**

Fenja Brodo  
Bill Cody  
Francis Cook  
Karen McLachlan  
Hamilton  
Elizabeth Morton  
Joyce Reddoch



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# Conservation Matters

*David Hobden*

## **Greenspace Master Plan**

We have just received the first part of the draft report of the Urban Natural Areas Environmental Evaluation Study (UNAEES). The City intends to use the report as a basis for the Greenspace Master Plan (GMP) to be released in April. Since much of the significant greenspace in the City is in the areas not covered by the UNAEES study we will be meeting with the planner for the GMP and hope to find out how important greenspaces in the rural areas and greenbelt are being included.

Carp River Remediation Project OFNC has agreed to be listed as a supporter of this project which is intended as a showcase for responsible management of riverfront lands. The project area is located south of Carp, near old highway 40 and the Carp Airport. If we are asked for volunteers, this could be a great opportunity for you to help, with guidance from experts. Come to monthly meetings or watch the web site!

## **Alfred Bog**

With the conservation status of the bog established, the Alfred Bog Committee is turning its attention to supporting Ontario Parks in the development of a management plan and deciding upon the level of protection to assign to the bog. A term employee has been hired to work on bog issues such as consolidating information about the bog and working up an application for RAMSAR status. We all thank Frank Pope for his years of hard work for Alfred Bog.

## **Larose Forest**

The Friends of Larose Forest lost their appeal to the OMB (the decision can be read at <http://www.omb.gov.on.ca/e%2Ddecisions/pl030382%5F%231920.pdf>). The OMB decision found the Friend's testimony to be lacking in credibility, although in fact their expert witnesses were fully qualified professionals. The developers, Francoscenie are applying for costs against the Friends in the amount of \$137,000. While costs are rarely awarded against citizens who act in the public interest and not for personal gain, the decision on costs rests with the Board. The outcome was not known at the time of writing. Please check the OFNC Larose pages for updates on the issue: <http://www.ofnc.ca/conservation/larose/laroseforest.html>.

### **Carp Ridge Proposed Development**

The Carp Ridge is home to a class 1 wetland complex atop a unique block of Precambrian Shield granite, which has been identified in provincial and regional studies as an area of Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) but so far not protected. A proposal for development of a 130 acre subdivision straddling some of the wetland was approved in 1991 by the former Township of West Carleton, and recently reintroduced. There are many environmental risks, including those of groundwater contamination. Opposition to this development is being led by a citizens' group, the Carp Ridge Society. The issue now at City Hall is whether a plan that might not meet current standards can be allowed to happen because it reached a certain level of approval 14 years ago.

### **Official Plan Amendment #16**

The City recently approved a development proposal for the Kanata Special Study Area (KSSA) at the western edge of the defined urban area. The KSSA includes 20 acres of natural environment area (NEA) land. Under a deal agreed to by the City, the owner is allowed to develop the 20 acres, in return for turning over 20 acres of rural NEA land to City ownership. City Council approved the swap, despite consultants reports and strong staff recommendations that no development should be allowed on the urban 20 acres. Several appeals to the OMB against this deal have been filed. Given the OMB's record of supporting landowner rights above environmental protection, it will be difficult for the OFNC to decide how these appeals can be supported.

You can check out the OFNC web pages for monthly summaries and more information about many of these issues at <http://www.ofnc.ca/conserv.htm>.

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# News from the FWG: Summer through Winter 2004/2005

*Christine Hanrahan*

By the time you receive this update, signs of spring should be spreading across the land. This report, however, looks back to the end of summer through fall 2004 and into midwinter 2005.

## **Backyard Garden News**

Jay Ladell, the innovative manager of the Backyard Garden (BYG), continues to implement the long term plan for the area, with the help of the dedicated BYG volunteers. A new stone wall now flanks the north side of the garden where a revitalized entrance is being established. Garden beds have been changed in size and structure, the bird feeder has been moved further into the garden and a refurbished feeder has been installed (thanks to Dale and Malcolm).

The nursery behind the garden shed has been expanded to twice the original size, with a flagstone path separating the upper and lower beds, and a new watering system installed.

Landscape Ontario provided an ample supply of leaves for the leaf depot just west of the Interpretive Centre. This allowed us to mulch not only the BYG but most of the newly planted shrubs and trees elsewhere in the garden.

## **Upcoming Events at FWG**

### **International Migratory Bird Day**

**Saturday, 14 May 2005**

**10:00 a.m. to 12 noon**

Join us to welcome back the birds by participating in guided walks around FWG. We'll have displays, handouts and more.

Contact me at [vanessa@magma.ca](mailto:vanessa@magma.ca) for details.

### **Annual Native Plant Sale**

**Saturday, 4 June 2005**

**9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Donation of native plants or seeds is welcome, either on the day of the sale or beforehand.

Info: Sandy (730-0714; [sgarland@magma.ca](mailto:sgarland@magma.ca)) or Jay ([jay\\_ladell@yahoo.com](mailto:jay_ladell@yahoo.com)).



*Malcolm and Dale installing a new feeder. Photo by C. Hanrahan.*

Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2005 native plant sale. Jay and Sandy have been growing a variety of seeds in preparation for this event and we should have some very interesting new plants for sale.

### **Management Committee**

Many people may not realize that the FWG is run by a hard working committee currently consisting of nine people, including a representative from the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, and two regular guests. It is chaired by David Hobden. Decisions on matters large and small are made during our monthly meetings and, if urgent, by email. Many of the members have been involved for a number of years. However, we welcome new folk such as Colin Freebury who appeared at the FWG in late spring 2004, and quickly made himself an integral part of the operation. Luckily for us, he also joined the committee. Many of the issues (such as signs, events, hiring of a summer employee, habitat maintenance, BYG



management, and so on) highlighted in these various updates arise from our committee meetings. OFNC members are welcome to sit in our meetings which take place the fourth Wednesday of each month at the garden.

### **Media**

Annie Belair, our summer employee, was interviewed by students participating in a Radio Summer Camp at CKCU, the Carleton University radio station. Annie took them on a tour of the garden and afterwards handled all their remarkably astute questions with savoir-faire. Both Annie and the kids did a fantastic job.

Marianne Neilly, well-known local poet and author, was interviewed by CJOH for their program Regional Contact and was filmed "on location" at the FWG last summer. The show aired February 5, 2005.

### **Signs**

We are still considering new signs, one for the entrance on Prince of Wales, and one at the parking lot. Charlie Clifford has been spearheading the not-so-easy issue of exploring all the options available including design and construction, installation, material, and cost. We should be making a decision soon. Stay tuned!

### **Dogs**

In an earlier issue I mentioned that dogs and their owners are probably the most numerous visitors to the garden (followed by birders, some of whom are brought by their dogs). While most owners are responsible by scooping the poop and controlling their pets, a small minority are less so. It is the latter that are occasioning complaints and causing the majority to look bad. Colin Freebury interviewed 33 dog owners one Saturday morning to see what might be done about this. They came from across the city and all felt very strongly that the FWG was a special place which they were privileged to use. They were concerned that the actions of thoughtless owners would impact negatively on the rest and to that end were more than supportive of organizing a clean-up day in the spring. Colin will talk to some of them in early spring and ask them to organize the event.

### **Problems**

Vandalism reared its ugly head in early October when various things were stolen (the leaflet box in front of the Interpretive Centre, a tarp over the nursery beds, and the garden cart), or destroyed (the BYG pond sign and a bird box). At about the same time a game of paintball was held in the Ash Woods and various trees were hit by bright pink paint which fortunately soon wore off. Sometime later, several tarpaulins covering piles of swallowwort near the Ash Woods were taken. Plant theft continues to plague us. Once again we remind readers that if they see anything suspicious at FWG to please call AAFC Security at 759-1985 and the FWG at 234-6767.

## **Managing the Habitats**

### ***Old Field Buckthorn removal***

During 2004, invasive buckthorn shrubs growing in the thickets around the Old Field habitat, were tagged for removal. Many of the female fruit-bearing shrubs were cut down, a process which left large gaps in the all-important thickets around the field. Further buckthorn removal will take place in 2005 and 2006 along with replanting the thickets with native species. It will take some years before the thickets regain their former density to offer good cover and protected nest sites for birds. However, a great start was made in 2004 with many trees and shrubs planted including hawthorns, Red osier Dogwoods, Eastern White Cedars, and both Pin and Choke Cherries.

We are trying to balance the removal of invasive species with retention of wildlife habitat. In the case of the Old Field, the thickets surrounding the site have provided excellent habitat for birds, foxes, rabbits and other animals. The density and structure of the thickets were such that even when the leaves had fallen they afforded much needed protective cover. Unfortunately, much of that came from the numerous large buckthorns which had flourished there for many years. Because their removal fragmented the thickets, cutting them all down at once would result in too great a loss of habitat. As with other invasive species, removal is a long-term project. In 2004, buckthorn work was carried out by Annie Belair, Malcom Leith, Colin Freebury and Tony Denton, while in the replanting I was helped by Claudia Burns and Colin. Colin and Tony also planted a small thicket of hawthorn shrubs donated by Renate Regier. Colin has initiated a "Buckthorn control and habitat development" project in one of the Old Field thickets. He will measure how well the newly planted material grows and what effect the buckthorn removal has on wildlife usage, as well as recording any regrowth of buckthorn in the area. Full details of the project can be found in the Interpretive Centre.

### ***Planting in other areas***

Considerable planting was also done in the semicircle west of the Ash Woods, on the southern edge of the Ash Woods, as well as inside the woods where many of the large Tartarian Honeysuckles were removed.

### ***New Woods***

In order to maintain Tree Swallow habitat on the south slope of the Pond, we have decided to remove most of the trees planted there. Originally planned as part of the New Woods, many Tree Swallow nest boxes were erected amongst the slow-growing seedlings which were so small that the site was, for many years, a perfect open space for swallows. We didn't anticipate that the boxes would attract so many pairs of swallows or be so successful. However, as the trees began to attain a significant height, we belatedly realized that very soon the nest boxes would become unsuitable



for the swallows as a forest grew up around them. One of our volunteers knowledgeable about such things, Malcolm Leith, has suggested a way of preparing these now reasonably large trees for removal. We anticipate working on this throughout the spring to fall seasons, eventually transplanting the trees to a more acceptable site and leaving the south slope of the pond for swallows.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers are the backbone of this project and without them the whole thing would fail quickly. If you would like to help, the following are some defined volunteer sessions running from the spring through to the fall of 2005:

- *Friday morning:* regular work in the BYG takes place.
- *Sunday morning:* volunteers work primarily in the rest of the garden, planting, weeding out invasives, and helping with other tasks as required.
- *Sunday afternoon:* During summer months the Interpretive Centre is staffed by volunteers usually from noon to 4:00 p.m.
- *Wednesday evening:* Organized by Jay to do more of the heavy landscaping work in the BYG as well as other tasks as they arise.

We are sad to report that Terry Clarke passed away last year. Terry and his wife Cathy were volunteers in the BYG. Terry also built a number of our bird boxes including robin platforms and wren and chickadee boxes which he and Cathy helped place around the garden. He was a keen birder and loved the outdoors. Our condolences go out to Cathy.

There are always other opportunities. To find out more please contact the FWG (details at end of article).

### **Plants and Animals**

#### ***Birds***

Perhaps the most exciting visitor we've ever had at the garden was the Great Gray Owl found by Marilyn Ward and Connie Clark in mid-December. Since then a Great Gray has been observed at least six times at FWG. As everyone knows by now, the winter of 2004-2005 was remarkable for the irruption of this northern species into the southern part of the province including the Ottawa area.

A great Horned Owl first observed around the farm on Morningside Lane in early December was found in the Arboretum several times thereafter. We haven't noticed it at FWG, but most surely it has hunted the area. A year ago this species spent the winter in the garden, reliably found roosting in the same spruce tree beneath which accumulated quite a pile of pellets.

For the last five or six years a Northern Shrike has turned up in November and 2004 was no exception. It was noted only infrequently afterwards, usually around the frozen pond or the Old Field. Another old faithful is the Red-tailed Hawk which generally arrives in late fall and sticks around for the winter.



*Tree Swallows. Photo by Canute.*

Not a rare bird, but definitely an odd one for the FWG was the Ruffed Grouse observed briefly in late September. I had been checking some newly planted shrubs on the edge of the Old Field when the grouse strutted out of a nearby thicket and proceeded to watch me watching her before flying into a nearby crabapple tree which was the last I saw of her.

There was a dearth of sparrows this fall in the garden, and although we did see some of the regular species such as White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, they were present in reduced numbers. In addition to the typical winter birds, a few Common Redpolls were found in mid-December, while Dark-eyed Juncos could be found

sporadically throughout the winter. Up to seven robins were frequently found in the area throughout the winter. By the time you read this the early migrants will have returned and nesting season will once again be underway.

### ***Other Fauna***

For the past several years we have seen a beaver at FWG, and such was the case in November when a young animal was noticed swimming in the pond. However, it was only observed once.

Cottontail rabbits are at the height of a population cycle and while a few years ago we were thrilled to see one at FWG, the pleasure has worn off somewhat as we survey the winter damage caused by escalating numbers of these cute but voracious little critters. Oddly, the fox population seems to be going the opposite way at FWG. Whereas in previous winters this animal—or its tracks and scat—was spotted fairly

frequently, the past winter has been noticeable for a near absence both at FWG and the farm in general. Given the abundance of rabbits, voles and other small rodents around the garden this winter, it is puzzling that foxes appear to be so scarce.

Coyotes are fairly common in the rural portions of the city and beyond, although not often seen, but it was quite a surprise to find one on the farm in January. The animal was clearly lost and seemed rather spooked by its surroundings, not to mention all the dog walkers along the farm roads. I don't know where it went to, but I would be surprised if it didn't venture over to FWG with its greater protective cover. Hopefully it found its way back to wherever it came from.

Yellow-legged Meadowhawks were present in small numbers until the weather turned considerably colder in early November. A few Praying Mantis were noticed in the fall, but not anywhere near as frequently as several years ago when they seemed to be everywhere.

**Acknowledgments:** As always, grateful thanks to the many volunteers without whom the garden would be a very different place. Thanks also to Canute for his great photo.

#### **FWG Details and Contact Information**

The FWG is located off Prince of Wales Drive on the Central Experimental Farm. For more information please visit the website at: <http://www.ofnc.ca/fletcher.php>. There you can sign up for our free newsletter *What's Up at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden*, available electronically. Brochures about the garden are available from inside on Friday mornings from spring through fall, Sunday afternoons in the summer, or during the week June through August when we have a summer employee.

- FWG phone number: 613-234-6767
- David Hobden, Chair, FWG Management Committee: [dhobden@magma.ca](mailto:dhobden@magma.ca)
- Jay Ladell, BYG Manager:  
[jay\\_ladell@yahoo.com](mailto:jay_ladell@yahoo.com)
- Sandy Garland: Newsletter, information about the FWG: [sgarland@magma.ca](mailto:sgarland@magma.ca)
- Christine Hanrahan: bird and wildlife observations: [vanessa@magma.ca](mailto:vanessa@magma.ca)

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# The Hornyhead Chub, *Nocomis biguttatus*, A Fish New to the National Capital Region (Actinopterygii: Cyprinidae)

Brian W. Coad and Noel Alfonso

McAllister and Coad (1974) summarised the fish fauna of the National Capital Region and recorded 75 species. In the 30 years since, only four species have been added to the local ichthyofauna. These additions, confirmed by specimens preserved in the Canadian Museum of Nature or unequivocal sight records, were the Alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) recorded in Coad (1983), the Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) from sight records 1988-2002 by B. W. Coad, the Chestnut Lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon castaneus*) recorded in Renaud and de Ville (2000), and the Northern Brook Lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon fossor*) recorded in Comtois *et al.* (2004). The Pygmy Smelt (*Osmerus spectrum*) is variously recognised as a distinct taxon or not (see "Catalog of Fishes" at [www.calacademy.org](http://www.calacademy.org)) and other species listed in Coad (1987) require confirmation for the NCR.

A fifth species is recorded here based on recent collections. The description below follows the format of *Fishes of Canada's National Capital Region*. A website under construction, which is a revision of that work, is accessible at [www.briancoad.com](http://www.briancoad.com).

We are indebted to Katrina Lay for her help in collecting this species, to Eric Snyder, Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum (Kemptville), for organising the field expedition, and Erling Holm, Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto), for collection records.



*Nocomis biguttatus* (Kirtland, 1840)

HORNYHEAD CHUB

TÊTE À TACHES ROUGES



**Distinguishing features.** The Hornyhead Chub is distinguished from other fishes in the region by having a single, small barbel at each mouth corner and a lateral line scale count of 38-48.

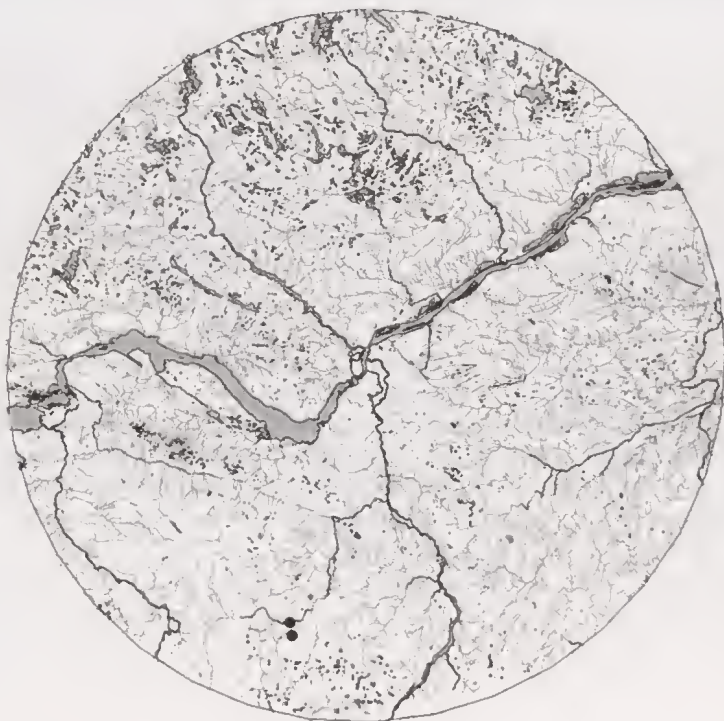
**Description.** The head is large and rounded, the snout projects only slightly over the mouth and the upper lip is separated by a groove from the snout. Pectoral fins are short and do not reach the pelvic fin level.

Dorsal fin branched rays number 6-7, usually 7, branched anal fin rays number 5-6, usually 6, pectoral fin rays number 14-17, and pelvic fin rays number 8. Pharyngeal teeth formula is 1, 4-4, 1, 4-4 or 4-3 and the teeth have hooked tips. There are about 12 short gill rakers in total. Meristic characters of the Jock River specimen fall within these ranges. Males develop up to 130 large and pointed tubercles on top of the head with others on the pectoral fin rays. Faint tubercle scars or sites were

present on the head of the Jock River specimen but were not well-developed.

The back is olive-brown, flanks are silvery with slight golden or iridescent green tinges and the belly is yellowish to white. Upper flank scales are outlined by pigment with a dark bar posteriorly. All fins have a yellow to orange pigmentation, particularly the dorsal, caudal and anal fins, becoming richer in colour in breeding males when the fins may be reddish. Breeding males also develop a strong, black flank stripe and a red spot behind the eye. Fish from the Jock River showed this red spot but not the stripe. Females have a stripe at spawning but this is lost as they move off the spawning grounds. Young fish have a red caudal fin.

Described from a voucher specimen, 100.1 mm standard length, deposited in the Canadian Museum of Nature (CMNFi 2004-0401). This species is recorded from the Jock River on Franktown Road (45°08'06"N, 75°55'59"E) and a tributary, Kings Creek on Jock Trail Road near Dwyer Hill Road (45°07'14"N, 75°55'55"W), caught on 25 June 2004. Although fish up to 25.0 cm are known, the average size in Canada is about 9.0 cm.





**Origin.** This species is reported as spreading from its original, known distribution in southwestern Ontario in recent years (Dalton, 1989; Erling Holm, pers. comm., 29 June 2004, based on Royal Ontario Museum records). The records here represent the easternmost location known for Canada. Movement into the National Capital Region may be natural or facilitated by bait-bucket introductions.

**Biology.** The habitat of this species is slow, clear streams and rivers with gravel or sand bottoms, in both pools and riffles. They may hide under rocks. This agrees with capture localities in the NCR although they were also caught over bedrock. Food is aquatic insects, worms, crayfish, snails and fish along with algae which probably is not absorbed although associated animal life is. Life span is four years with males being larger than females since they build and defend a nest. Spawning starts at a water temperature of 16°C, usually in May to July, when males build a nest 1 m long, 1 m wide and 15 cm deep. Nests resembling this were seen in the Jock River on 25 June. Each female contains up to 995 adhesive eggs of 2.0 mm in diameter. Other species caught with the Hornyhead Chub in the NCR were Common Shiners (which defend the nest too), Bluntnose Minnows and Johnny Darters (which also use the nest), Pumpkinseeds, Rock Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Creek Chubs, Banded Killifishes, Blackchin Shiners, Central Mudminnows, Muskellunge, and Golden Shiners. This fish has been widely used as bait and can itself be caught on baited hooks and dry flies.



*Jock River on Franktown Road, downstream view, 25 June 2004.*

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Brian Coad, Canadian Museum of Nature, P. O. Box 3443, Station D, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6P4, e-mail: [bcoad@mus-nature.ca](mailto:bcoad@mus-nature.ca)

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## The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards for Young Ornithologists

### *Long Point Bird Observatory*

The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards offers six people 13-17 years old a chance to experience "hands-on" training in field ornithology at Long Point Bird Observatory. The award covers accommodation, meals, and travel costs while at Long Point. Recipients are responsible for getting to and from Long Point. The workshop will held from 29 July to 7 August.

Interested individuals can obtain application forms from either the website ([www.bsc-eoc.org/lpbo/yow.html](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/lpbo/yow.html)) or from Jon McCracken, Long Point Bird Observatory, Box 160, Port Rowan, ON, N0E 1M0, fax: (519) 586-3532, email: [lpbo@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:lpbo@bsc-eoc.org). Anyone who is interested should contact LPBO directly or check the website for updates. **Applications are due 30 April 2005.**

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# OFNC Bird Records Sub-committee Activities 2004

*C.R.Bowen*

The Bird Records Sub-committee is responsible for the integrity of the occurrence data maintained and disseminated by the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. The Sub-committee actively solicits reports for this purpose. The Sub-committee decides which occurrences are sufficiently documented and merit being included in "A Birder's Checklist of Ottawa" which is published by OFNC. The Sub-committee has recently prepared a re-formatted "Field Checklist" for publication by the Club. This new "Field Checklist" is now available.

The Sub-committee encourages documentation of any sighting, within 50 km radius, (The Peace Tower being the centre point), of a bird species not in the 1993 edition of "A Birder's Checklist of Ottawa." Ken Allison has prepared an excellent article on pain-free preparation of reports. It is on the Club web-site at:

<http://www.ofnc.ca/birding/rarebirds.html>. This link also provides a short list of rarer species, already on the Checklist, yet deserving documentation. Finally, documentation is desired for many out of season occurrences. If you have an observation that falls outside the distribution on the Checklist, please call 860-9000 and report it to the status line. This will ensure that someone will call you back and discuss your find with you.

The Sub-committee members for 2004 were:

Ken Allison - Chair

Colin Bowen - Recording Secretary

Bruce Di Labio

Mark Gawn

Robert Gorman

Paul Jones

Bernie Ladouceur

Christina Lewis

Gordon Pringle

Daniel St.-Hilaire

Michael Tate

Chris Traynor

## Brief Summation of Activities of Sub-committee for 2004

The Sub-committee held three meetings during 2004. The first was held in January to review the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data prior to release. The September meeting was held mainly to review Rare Bird Reports. The third meeting was a

Reports are arranged by English and scientific names following the Seventh Edition of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (American Ornithologists' Union 1998) and its 44th supplement (American Ornithologists' Union 2003).

OFNC  
Attention Bird Records Sub-Committee  
PO Box 35069, Westgate P.O.  
Ottawa, Ont.  
K1Z-1A2

These accepted reports include new reports as well deferred reports where new documentation or evidence is now available. Report Writer's Name(s) is underlined and *Finder's Name(s)*, when known is in italics.

2004 - 18 April, Québec, Plaisance, Plaisance Parc, Baie de la Pentecôte: Christina Lewis, *Jean Dubois*, Bob Bracken, Bill Clark, Bob Cermak, Tom Hanrahan, Marc Latremouille, Paul Mirsky. Seen by many other birders. This bird was accepted as a Pink-footed Goose but it was not determined whether it was an escapee or a wild bird. Last seen: 28 April, 2004. Photos on file.

2001 - 08 April, Ontario, Prescott-Russell Co., 12 mi North of Russell, Hamilton Road (North End); Roger Clark, Janet Castle, Bonnie Harden, Paul Schoening. Last seen: 08 April 2001.



- Tufted Duck**                      *Aythya fuligula*  
 2003       -                      30 April, Ontario, Ottawa, Shirleys Bay; Bob Bracken & Christina Lewis, Hervé Tremblay, Tony Beck, Mark Gawn, Tom Hanrahan, Joyce & Mike Jacques, Maxine & Gordon McLean, Paul Mirsky, Bev Peterkin, Bev Scott, Dave Smythe, Phil Wright and many other birders. Last seen: 09 May 2003. **First Record Ottawa District.**
- 2003       -                      7 & 9 May, Ontario, Ottawa, Shirleys Bay; Ken Allison, Hervé Tremblay, Ruth Allison and many other birders. Last seen: 09 May 2003. Same bird as above.
- Piping Plover**                      *Charadrius melodus*  
 2004       -                      13 May, Québec, Gatineau Co., Gatineau (Aylmer), beach adjacent to Aylmer Marina; Chris Traynor, Jean Dubois. Last seen: 13 May 2004. Photo on file.
- Willet**                                *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus semipalmatus*  
 1990       -                      29 July, Ontario, Ottawa, Andrew Hayden Park (Ottawa Beach); Tony Beck. This bird was accepted as a Willet in 1996. A photo received this year confirms that it was an Eastern Sub-species *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus semipalmatus*. **First Record for Ottawa District.** Last seen: 29 July 1990.
- Ruff**                                    *Pilomachus pugnax*  
 2004       -                      02 May, Ontario, Prescott-Russell Co., Embrun Sewage Lagoon SW Cell; Bernie Ladouceur, Paul Matthews, Daniele Mitchel, Andrew Stonea, Alex Stone and other birders. Last Seen: 03 May 2004.
- Sabine's Gull**                      *Xema sabini*  
 2004       -                      05 September, Ontario, Ottawa, South of Bells Corner, Gravel and Sand Pit; Bob Bracken & Christina Lewis, Bernie Ladouceur. Last Seen: 05 September 2004.
- Forster's Tern**                      *Sterna forsteri*  
 2004       -                      24 May, Ontario, Ottawa, Ottawa River, below Des Chênes Rapids. Bob Bracken & Christina Lewis, Bernie Ladouceur. Last Seen: 24 May 2004.

Brewster's Warbler      *Vermivora pinus x Vermivora chrysoptera*  
2004      -      06 June, Ontario, Ottawa (Kanata), 0.5 miles East of Huntmar  
Road along Railroad Tracks. Bernie Ladouceur, Jan Slumkoski.  
Last Seen: 06 June 2004.

### UNACCEPTED REPORTS

Identification uncertain

In many cases the documentation submitted for the following report(s) was found not to contain enough detail to rule out another species of bird. Also included in this category are reports where the report was of a First Record for the district but was a single observer sighting. These submissions were often of high quality but to obtain First Record status, there must be more than one competent observer or accompanying photo(s). In all cases, if additional documentation is received, these reports will be revisited. Reports that are not voted on are also included here. These may be reports of birds that were submitted but do not require a rare bird report.

2003      -      Troupial Oriole (*Icterus icterus*), 30 May, Ontario, Ottawa, Petrie  
Island, just West of the Sand Quarry.

A special thanks to all who took the time to prepare a Rare Bird Reports. Your effort is much appreciated by the Bird Records Sub-Committee. Thanks also to Ken Allison for his assistance in reviewing of this report.

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## Orchid Festival in the Village of Lanark

*Fenja Brodo*

If you haven't seen the Orchids blooming in Purdon Fen, grab this opportunity to visit. They are spectacular.

This year the Club is not running a trip to the see the orchids, but the village of Lanark is holding its annual Orchid Festival on Saturday 25 June 2005. Lanark itself is also a lovely destination at this time of the year. There will be continuous bus service from Lanark to Purdon Fen from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at a nominal cost.



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# Great Horned Owls Nesting Again at the Britannia Conservation Area

*Daniel F. Brunton*

A really good way to get a quick fix on the ecological health of a place is to 'interview' its predators. These creatures, after all, are at the end of their food chain. If they are prospering, sustainable level of shelter, breeding and feeding opportunities, should be in place there. The prosperity of predators might well be a more valuable ecological health indicator in urban natural areas where natural functions are often severely challenged.

The Britannia Conservation Area ('Mud Lake') along the Ottawa River shore in Britannia, Ottawa, is a good example of an ecologically significant urban natural area that supports small but apparently sustainable populations of a variety of breeding predators. The exceptional biodiversity of this parcel of National Capital Commission (NCC) and City of Ottawa land has been well known for many years (Brunton 1969a; Billington and Tozer 1977; Environmental Management Branch 1998; Brunton, Douglas & Di Labio 2004). But it has not been without significant habitat challenges and problems, as indicated by the success and failure of some of its predators over the years.

## **Gone missing**

In the 1960s, the Britannia Conservation Area was one of the best places in or near the urban part of the City of Ottawa (former Region of Ottawa-Carleton) where one could see such exotic wild creatures as American Beaver (!), Red Fox, Pileated Woodpecker, Porcupine and nesting Great Horned Owls. While the populations of some of these species have dramatically increased in the Ottawa urban landscape, that is certainly not the case for the owls. A study of the feeding habits of the nesting owls in 1968 (based on the analysis of fur and bone remains in their regurgitated pellets of indigestible material) indicated that the birds were hunting mostly in the scrubby fields in adjacent Lincoln Heights and even amongst the older residential buildings of Britannia Village. But was this enough?

As early as the late 1960s concern was raised about the sustainability of nesting activity for such large raptors in such a small area (Brunton 1969b). The thinning of the forest around Mud Lake ca. 1969-1970 in the course of an ill-conceived Dutch Elm Disease control program and residential development in the Lincoln Heights fields in the early 1970s appears to have changed the ecological dynamics of the area. Those changes in quality and extent of natural habitat 35 years ago apparently made the Mud Lake forest less suitable for both the predators and the prey.

The last successful Great Horned Owl nesting at Britannia was in the spring of 1969 when a pair successfully raised one young (pers. obs.). No evidence of nesting was found in 1970 or 1971, however. One Great Horned Owl was seen well into breeding season the following year (24 April 1972) but there was no evidence of residence or nesting thereafter.

In the three decades subsequent to the loss of Great Horned Owls from the Britannia Conservation Area the woodland habitat around Mud Lake has been slowly recovering from the negative management impacts. By the end of the 1990s the woodland canopy had largely repaired itself from the earlier thinning (Poison-ivy was *finally* starting to die out), although the severe infestation of honeysuckle and buckthorn shrubbery resulting from the extra light provided by the canopy fragmentation was still all too successful. By then too the relatively sterile meadows both east and west of the lake had regenerated into increasingly young forest vegetation. The western meadow ('Taylors Field') had largely evolved into a scrubby young deciduous forest. Young White Pine trees on the eastern side of the lake now formed a substantial grove, grading into the more mature deciduous swamp forest to the east. And Great Horned Owls were again being seen in the woods, though only as winter residents. Still, the obvious question began to be asked . . . had the woods recovered sufficiently to again support at least an attempted nesting by these huge avian predators?

In both 2002 and 2003 a pair of Great Horned Owls lingered in the Britannia Conservation Area well into the nesting period (April and May) but despite extensive searches around Mud Lake, no nest was found and no owls were observed later in the summer. It began to look like nesting was just not to be, and despite the ecological enhancements which had occurred over the previous three and a half decades, the place was just too small and resources too limited by surrounding development to support the substantial food requirements of nesting Great Horned Owls.

### **They're back . . .**

Delightfully, 2004 proved that assessment to be completely wrong. Once again, a pair of owls wintered in the woods and by mid winter were seen to be showing hints of interest in nesting (mild courting activities, continued close contact etc.). In March, as the peak breeding season drew in, however, the pair showed increasing interest in a particular area west of Mud Lake<sup>1</sup>. The collective group of observers who regularly visited the Britannia Conservation Area woodlands in general and who soon 'adopted' the owls in particular, were increasingly hopeful of a nesting attempt. These folks whom I came to refer to as 'the Mud Lake Mafia' were extremely important to the owls during the events

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<sup>1</sup> Although many people now know of the exact nest location, it is not wise to publicize that any more than necessary and I am being intentionally vague. Large predators make tragically easy targets for malicious or thoughtless individuals bent on 'trophy' hunting and the like.

of the subsequent weeks, providing valuable guardianship for the birds as well as providing some of the information and insights which I am reporting here.

The breakthrough came in late April. Somehow—I'll never figure out how—Hervé Tremblay spotted a tiny bit of white fluff poking out over the edge of a sad excuse for an abandoned Common Crow's nest (just a bundle of sticks, really). He was sure it was a Great Horned Owl nestling. The nest was almost invisible, situated 75 feet (23 m) up in the dense crown of a mature White Pine and looking all the world like snagged debris from the 1999 Ice Storm (there are many such bundles in this woodland). To make matters more challenging, the top side (contents) of the nest structure could only be seen clearly by peering through the forest canopy from very precise spots located quite some distance from the nest tree. Hervé showed the site to me the next day (22 April) and after much peering through, around and under branches, we became convinced that his earlier conclusion was correct. In fact, we felt sure we were seeing *two* white, fluffy nestlings. We later determined the second 'young' to not be a sibling owlet at all, but the remains of a Ring-billed Gull. Thus began a saga that lasted for several weeks and involved dozens of observers (and many more searchers) as we followed the owlet to maturity.

In late April the young owl was little more than a gull-sized, gangly ball of white down. The adult male (judging by his smaller size) guarded the nest site from a perch at the same height in the crown of another pine about 25 m away. The female adult (judging by her greater size) did likewise from a similarly regular crown-top perch 30 m off in another direction. The adults



*Figure 1: Paul Gully ascending nest tree.*



showed little or no interest in the growing gaggle of observers below—the advantages of such a high nest—and both adults and the young spent virtually all their daylight time dozing in the warm spring sunshine.

### Early adventure

Confirmation that there was but a single nestling (as with the 1968 and 1969 nestings) was provided on 28 April when Dr. Paul Gully banded the owlet (with the permission from the National Capital Commission to climb the tree), assisted by Chris Traynor and myself. It was quite the operation. First, Paul labouriously worked his way up the tree (Figure 1), looping around and through branches for over half an hour, until he finally approached the nest. Being an experienced and fully licenced owl bander (sub-permit under the Innis Point Bird Observatory), Paul took no more chances than were necessary and was equipped with climbing spurs, a safety rope, and a protective helmet. The adult owls were less than amused by all this, giving seemingly anxious “*whreeeh*” calls and much bill clapping throughout the climb from their hidden positions in the forest canopy. As Paul approached the nest itself the male bird began giving soft “*hoo*” (or was that “*who?*”) calls with increasing urgency. Soon both adults were making threatening flybys and despite our shouted warnings, Paul could only be partially ready for the inevitable attack. When it came as he was approaching the nest structure, an adult owl smacked him from behind, ripping through his jacket and into his shoulder. Nothing subtle about



*Figure 2: Indignant owlet in nest at time of banding. Photo by P. Gully.*

their displeasure. All the while, a raucous crowd of over 35 Common Crows contributed to the mayhem, chasing the owls at every flight. The owls completely ignored them, as they were seen to do on many subsequent occasions, no matter how furious the verbal assault from the corvid chorus.

The young owl was no less unwelcoming to his human visitor but was more subdued in his response (Figure 2), peering out at Paul and flapping its developing wings madly. After the actual banding was completed—no mean feat as Paul was dangling 23 m above the ground with an armful of angry owlet and with furious adults periodically swooping past his ears—the owlet simply nibbled at the offending metal

band on its leg. But the excitement was not over.



*Figure 3: Chris Traynor checking newly banded owlet.*

When Paul carefully placed the young bird back in the nest, it stepped back. . . and promptly plummeted to the ground, landing with a thud between the very startled Chris and me. This was a complete shock to us (and no doubt to the owlet) but not to Paul as this is a not uncommon happening with over-exuberant owlets. Moments later a weighted line was streaming down towards us. After checking that all was in order (Figure 3), we looped the loose end around the bird's feet and it was unceremoniously hauled back up (Figure 4). This time it did *not* step out of the nest!



Figure 4: Oh the shame. . . the owlet being hauled back up to the nest.

All that fuss and adventure unfolded just after dawn. When checked again in late afternoon, however, the young was dozing away on the nest and both parents were perched with apparent unconcern on their regular roosts. Just another day in the Mud lake neighbourhood, it would seem.

#### **Growing up hungry**

During the banding Paul Gully found the partially eaten remains of a Common Crow and a Ring-billed Gull in the nest with the owlet along with the body of a freshly killed Starling. A freshly dismembered Common Crow carcass also lay on the ground by the nest tree. Clearly, the adult owls were preying heavily on birds and crows in particular were a favourite target. Pellets beneath the adults' roost trees through the winter overwhelmingly consisted of Cotton-tail Rabbit remains. Meadow Vole (*Microtus pensylvanicus*) bones and fur became the most frequent pellet components in late April (these rodents became easier to catch with the snow gone ?) and remained so through the rest of the nesting period.

With the protection of the birds in mind we consciously kept news of this event as quiet as possible, but word of the nesting soon spread across the Britannia Village 'jungle telegraph'. Dozens of people came out to look for it—almost all unsuccessfully until the young owl fledged. The Mud Lake Mafia was quietly present all along, keeping an eye on the young and adults alike and most importantly, providing a conspicuous presence in the event of less responsible casual visitors or



# ***Education & Publicity needs You!***

The Education & Publicity Committee needs new members and volunteers.

We promote the club and its activities.

We are renewing displays and presentations.

We especially need a media coordinator to contact the press, radio and local TV.

There is always room for fresh ideas and people to help get things done!

If you are interested in the committee:

Contact Gillian Marston

email—[marstong@cyberus.ca](mailto:marstong@cyberus.ca)

Phone—825-7248

# ***Education & Publicity***



Why is the Club holding a  
Nature Photography  
Contest?

## **MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTION!**

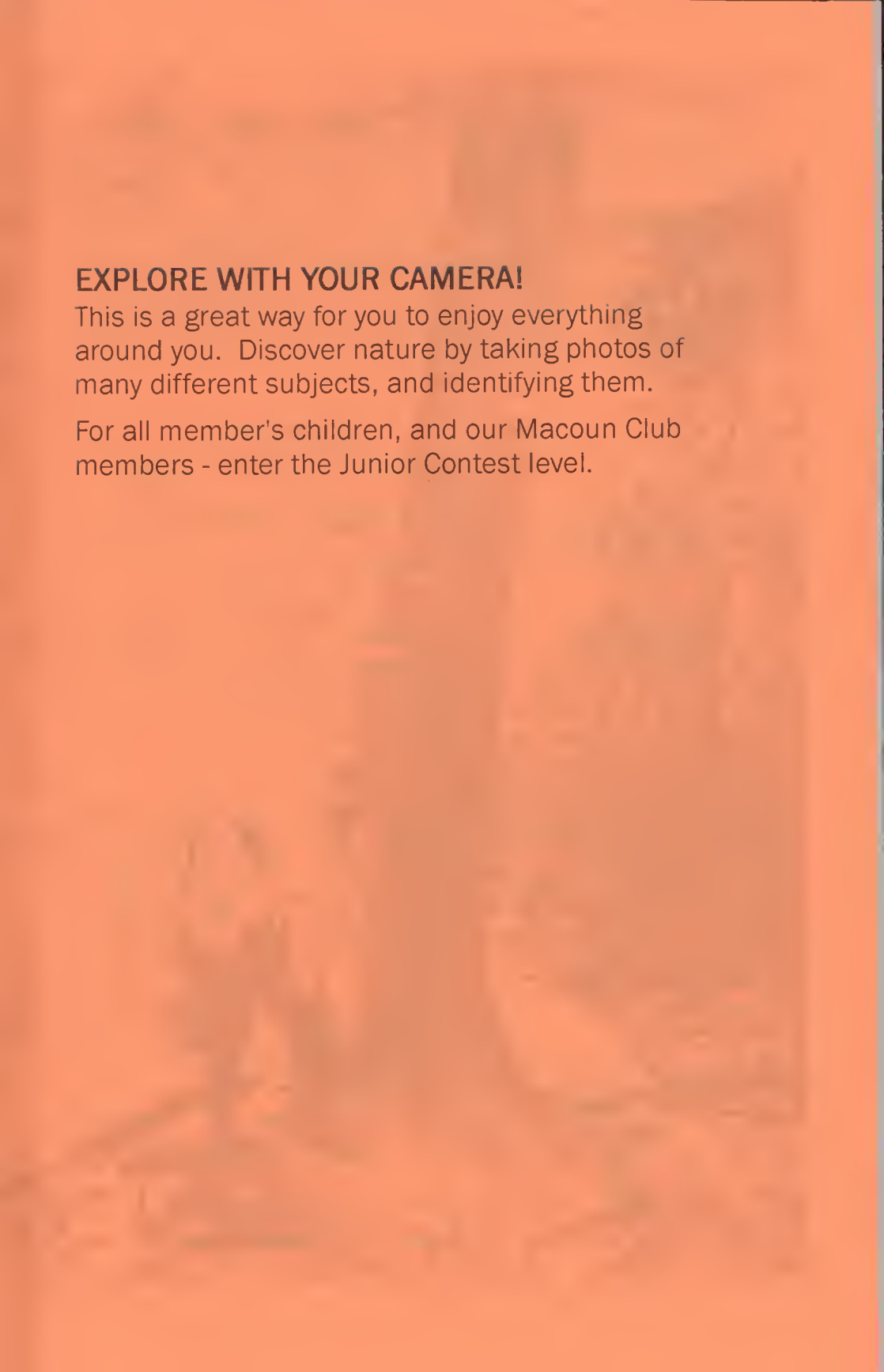
The Education & Publicity Committee needs photos of all kinds for its displays and presentations. We especially need photos of nature and natural places taken in the local area. We want to refresh our photo library with pictures taken by members.

So, to make it fun - we're having a contest. Send us pictures from all seasons, send us lots of them. Don't just send your best shot, we need them all. The more the better for the Committee's needs.

### **See contest details:**

Trail & Landscape: Oct-Dec 2004

<http://www.ofnc.ca/bulletin.htm#photos>

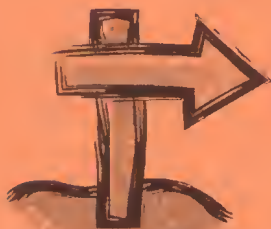


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# OFNC Nature Photography Contest



## Grand Prize Digital Camera Package by **Galaxy Camera**

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**Canon PowerShot A70**

*3.2 Megapixel, 3x Optical Zoom*

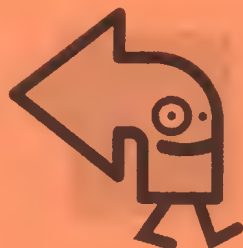
**Canon i860 Bubble Jet**

*Direct Photo Printer*

## **Tony Beck**

[www3.sympatico.ca/beck.tony](http://www3.sympatico.ca/beck.tony)

A nature photography  
session with Tony Beck  
for Junior Winners



## **Birders' Corner**

Bushnell Binoculars  
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Thank you to all our sponsors.*

searchers.

By 6 May the owlet was becoming significantly more alert to his world, peering around from its increasingly undersized and disintegrating nest platform. By now it showed distinct, if very short 'ear' tufts. A more mature feather pattern was evident on its head and back. Its belly remained predominantly white and downy, a characteristic that lasted well after the rest of its feathering had acquired an adult appearance. This rapid growth and development was fuelled by a steady stream of prey items, with Common Crow, Starling and Meadow Vole continuing to be most common food remnants found beneath both the nest tree and the adult roost sites.

On 8 May the body of a newly hatched Wood Duck nestling was found beneath the nest, presumably scooped up hours before by one of the adults as the ducklings made their perilous way from their tree-hole nest sites to the relative safety of Mud Lake. The remains of a Downy Woodpecker were also scattered about the base of the nest tree as were the remains of several more Ring-billed Gulls in the vicinity. Clearly, anything relatively small and moving was fair game. At dusk on most evenings, the rasping "*whreeep*" feeding calls of the young and the occasional soft "*hoo*" response of an adult could be heard regularly.

### The launch

Each day in early May we watched as the owlet got browner, larger and increasingly adult looking. By 9 May it was spending a lot of time exercising its wings and even moving along the branch about a metre away from the all but destroyed nest platform. The dangerous moment of first flight was obviously at hand. Great Horned Owl fledglings often flub their first flight, ending up on the ground. This presents relatively little danger in the wild but in this near-urban setting such an outcome could leave the virtually flightless owlet vulnerable to any marauding cat (of which there is an unfortunately larger feral colony at Britannia) or passing dog. Or even some well-meaning passer-by who might try to 'save' it and take it out of the woods to be rehabilitated. Left to their own devices, however, these young owls typically scramble up to a higher, safer elevation along a sloping log where they continue to be fed and cared for by their parents.

The great leap happened on the morning of 11 May. Once again, the Mud Lake Mafia saved the day as the young owl promptly landed on the edge of the main footpath through the Mud Lake forest (Figure 5). Fortunately, Dave Moore came along at the right time and while the 'Mafia' guarded the owlet, he called me over on his cell-phone. A few minutes later and wearing the heaviest gloves I could find (the bird was not fully grown but its talons certainly were), I carefully lifted up the young bird and carried it to a safer perch on a sloping log about 45 m away from the heavily used pathway. All the while, the adult male was hooting and bill-clapping in



annoyance in the pines above us. As I carried off the owlet, Dave Moore protected my back from unforeseen attack (which thankfully, did not come) by holding a pine bow over my head. It was a bizarre spectacle, to be sure, but a much appreciated precaution.



*Figure 5: Newly fledged Great Horn Owl on ground.*

The owlet settled into its new surroundings soon enough, seemingly unperturbed even by the five crows which descended to within 3 m of it, loudly proclaiming their disapproval of everything owlsh. After 15 minutes, it clambered further up the log until it was at a much safer 3-4 m off the ground.

Later that evening Chris Traynor discovered that the owlet had moved a considerable distance on its own—some 75 m—but still was under the watchful eye of the ever-vigilant parent birds which communicated to the young with soft hooting and quiet barking sounds. The young fellow was becoming mobile.

### Getting to know the neighbourhood

The adult owls and to a lesser extent, the fledgling were constantly harassed by Common Crows, often being assailed by flocks of 30 or 40 of those raucous birds. Though very loud and annoying to human observers, these avian 'paparazzi' had little apparent effect on the owls. No other birds were regularly observed to react to the owls either in flight or when perched, although the late-evening gathering of Ring-billed Gulls low over the forest canopy seemed to be louder and more focussed when one of the owls was in view. The only other animal commonly seen in the vicinity of the owls was the Gray Squirrel. These rodents were apparently ignored by the adults and were not found as prey (unavailable at night?), although the owlet did watch with apparent curiosity as one squirrel explored in its vicinity. The Gray Squirrels, for their part, seemed to take no notice of the owls.

A Cooper's Hawk had a different opinion, however. This uncommon raptor has nested in and about the Britannia Conservation Area for a number of years now (as has the regionally rare Merlin and Screech Owls). On 12 May, Chris Traynor observed a hawk physically assault the fledged Great Horned Owl while it perched about 5 m off the ground about 125 m from the nest site. The owlet puffed itself up and began bill clicking to dissuade the hawk, which presumably was acting in defence of a nearby nest, from attacking. No such luck. The increasingly belligerent hawk eventually swooped by the startled young owl, delivering a sharp blow to the young bird's head. That attack immediately resulted in hooting from the vicinity of the presumed female's roost, followed by the sudden appearance of the other adult owl who made a furious dive at the hawk. Discretion being the better part of valour, even in the defence of one's nest, the Cooper's Hawk took off and bothered the owlet no more.

Through all this, the owlet stuck close (within 200 m) of the nest site, occasionally returning to the very tree. It continued to ignore the goings on of human observers, although it was distracted by the attention-getting noises of photographers gathered below on 13 May. Another photographer was seen to be selling photographs of the bird at a crafts fair that week and directing purchasers to the owlet's location. As a whole, however, village residents and visiting birders alike were quiet and respectful of the need for peace and quiet for these animals.

By 16 May the young owl had become a reasonably competent flier, being observed perched on a small, otherwise inaccessible pine tree side branch over 20 m above of the ground. The bodies of four, partially-feathered Common Crow nestlings were found beneath the young owl's perch that day. The parents were apparently extending the scope of their predation beyond free-flying, adult crows and were now engaged in nest robbing as well.

### Successfully established

The young owl became increasingly hard to find as it became more adult and more skilled in flight. By late summer it had developed an independent area of activity, typically being found 150 m or so from the area favoured by its parents and all but indistinguishable from them in appearance.

The remains of Ring-billed Gulls could be found in the forest all through the summer, this all-too-common species evidently constituting a major summer food source for the owl family. The largest and most readily available night-time supply of gulls is the large nesting colony on the islands on the Québec side of the Deschênes Rapids about 800 m north of the owls' preferred haunts.

By early winter all three birds remained active in the woods near Mud Lake, thus offering good news and better prospects for birders, though bad news with worse prospects for Common Crows and Cotton-tail Rabbits. Best of all, though, the owls' success has proven that the habitat in this area is capable of hosting a breeding pair of major predators, that the overall ecological resources of the Britannia Conservation Area are in good shape, and that the future ecological prospects are promising. The latter point was underscored by the first known successful nesting of Pileated Woodpeckers at Mud Lake, also in the spring of 2004.

Despite the large number of human visitors to the Britannia Conservation Area, there have been very few signs of conflict with the owls; minor problems with some photographers to the contrary. The exceptional height of the tree canopy helps (this was the highest Great Horned Owl nest Paul Gully has encountered in and around Ottawa (pers. comm.)), as does the obscuring density of the pine tree canopy itself. There seems every reason to believe that responsible human use of the area will continue to have a neutral or even beneficial effect for nesting owls at Mud Lake.

We're hoping for a repeat nesting in 2005 and thereafter, of course<sup>2</sup>. I'm sure the Mud Lake Mafia will be up and ready just in case. Even if nesting is possible only in some years, however, the point has been made. After 35 years of recovery, Britannia is back.

### Acknowledgments

Thanks to Hervé Tremblay who shared his original discovery of the nest with me and provided other useful observations on the owls. The Mud Lake Mafia is worthy of considerable praise for their care and consideration of the owls throughout the

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- 2 In late February the owls were found to be nesting again at Britannia, offering promise of new adventures for both the birds and birders later this spring.

nesting and fledgling period. As I could only name a few of these folks, I'll not name any, but they really did play an important role in this success. Similarly, Chris Traynor spent many hours with the birds throughout the nesting period. He was a fountain of information about the owls' behaviour and provided photographic material as well. Owl bander extra ordinaire Paul Gully also provided photographic material and a wealth of information on this site and other National Capital Region owl nesting experiences.

An earlier draft of this article also benefited significantly from the review of fellow Mud Lake owl watcher, Karen McIntosh. My thanks to them all.

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## Innis Point Migration Monitoring

*Eve Ticknor*

Innis Point, located on the south shore of the Ottawa River about 15 km west of downtown Ottawa, is one of about 20 stations where the Spring Migration Monitoring Program occurs. Each year the Innis Point observatory concentrates on the spring migration.

Volunteers are needed to extract birds from mist nets and to identify and count birds in or passing over the area. The monitoring Program is about six weeks long (approximately mid to late April until early June) and runs seven days a week from about 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

If you would like more information or want to volunteer, please contact Eve Ticknor at 737-7551 or at [sandbird@magma.ca](mailto:sandbird@magma.ca).



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# A Loon's First Summer

Rosemary Anderson

*Observations of a Common Loon, from a cottage log book*

*July 17* A baby loon is on the lake with two parents, over by the island! Both parents are trying to feed the young loon with something long and skinny dangling from their beaks – can it be fish? It looks like water-weed! They are bending over the young loon – are they feeding it or enticing it, persuading it to grab the fish or weed? We go and get the scope and watch for quite a while. The young loon sticks close to one of its parents most of the time. Twice within half an hour it rides on the parent's back, with the parent swimming low in the water. It's brown.

Then back to the cottage to phone our neighbours who live at the lake full time. Have you seen the baby loon? When did you first see it? They saw it for the first time last Monday July 12, they tell us. As they keep a close watch on the lake, it would not have been more than a few days old then.

This is amazing news! We had given up hope of the loons producing any young this year. Last year we had seen an adult and the eggs on a nest on the east of the island, but no young. We thought that the eggs had been washed away in heavy rains or eaten by a predator. This year, as only one loon was on the lake for days at a time, we were hoping that the other was sitting. But then, as it was getting late and we had seen the two loons together on the lake again, we had given up hope. But we were wrong! The nest must have been well hidden!

The loons had arrived this year on April 23, just as soon as there was enough water to swim on between the sheets of ice.

*July 18* Much excitement as an osprey appears, flies over the loons and up to the pine tree on the left of the island. A heron also flies close over the loons, and takes up a fishing position near by at the edge of the other small island. We set up the scope again, fearing an attack by one or the other, but nothing happened. Neither predator has been seen at these positions before. Would they attack a small loon? No doubt they would if it were left alone, but the parents are doing a good job of guarding their young.



*July 19* The baby loon is still alive. No sign of the osprey or heron today.

*July 20* In the middle of the morning the loon family are heading very fast down to the other end of the lake. The young one is riding, but slips off. The parents slow down, but not for long, and the young one, swimming by itself, keeps pace with them very well. One parent keeps stopping to check to see if it is still there.

*July 25* The young loon is getting bigger day by day. It is now about one third the length of its parent. It swims very close to the parent still—sometimes so close that it cannot be seen. One of the parents regularly flies in a circle high above the lake, but this morning it flew away over the trees, leaving the young with only one parent for the first time that we have observed. The young loon's breast is turning much paler, and the head dark. It imitates the parents, rolling on its side and grooming, standing up in the water and flapping, or running on the water and flapping.

*August 5* It's cold at dawn, but a beautiful sunrise. At the end of the lake the dark pine forest is etched on the green-blue eastern sky. A few white clouds shine above it. The small island is black, and the water ripples across the lake towards it in a slight breeze. A loon flies over the trees, followed by another, in silhouette against the white clouds. They circle round calling, then fly towards me, passing close over my head, wings whistling, and over the forest behind me. Our young loon and his parent swim close to the shore where the water is dark and the fish are hiding.

Later in the morning, we see two more adult loons on the lake. Then in the evening, another three join them. A chase begins! One of the adults chases another at a terrific speed round the lake for about 15 minutes, doing a kind of butterfly stroke with its wings. The front runner keeps dodging and swerving. The chaser occasionally lunges sideways when he gets close to the front runner. Twice they take a break. What is going on? A huge amount of energy is being expended on this chase! The noise is terrific—like a speed boat! The young loon is swimming some distance away from the parents. It disappears from sight.

*August 11* The young loon is diving, staying under water for about nine seconds instead of the four recorded before. It harasses a parent for food, but we have not seen the parent feed him since that first day. He follows the parent very closely most of the time. Often both parents are close.

*August 21* One parent has left the young loon alone for the first time today that we have observed, flying off towards the east. It is back again by evening.

*August 22* Early this evening from high up the hill, I see what looks like a speed boat racing across the water with a white wake. But it's not a boat—once again,

there is a loon chase. It's amazing how fast they are going!

*August 24* We canoe for some time in the dusk, floating on the lake. The adult loon ignores us, swimming very fast close to our bow towards the opposite side of the lake, leaving the young one behind. It meets up with the other parent, and they gently "cuuk-cuuk" together. Then it swims at a good speed back towards the island calling the "doh-fah-me" call. The young loon immediately swims fast toward the calling parent, and they are re-united. What was that about?

*September 3* It is very hot today, with the wind from the west. Quiet too. Not even a sparrow to be seen. The moon was so bright last night, it was almost like sunlight. The young loon is now staying under water for about nine seconds for most dives, but one dive is fourteen seconds. It is practicing for take-off, wings flapping, running on the water further than before. The parent is still near by, and the young one makes a beeline for it at the first sign of danger.

*September 4* The young loon's head is becoming even darker and his throat is almost as white as its parent's. Its back is showing signs of the black and white adult checkerboard pattern. It is now seven weeks old.

*September 17* The weather is cloudy and cool. The young loon is in fine form—he dives and stays under for at least twenty seconds. The parents are losing their summer plumage and becoming browner. They fly off frequently, leaving the young one alone.

*September 26* The young loon is trying to fly again. It flaps quite a distance over the water, maybe 100 feet.

*October 4* It is cool and cloudy today with showers, and the wind is gusting strongly from the north-west. The young loon is alone on lake, as far as we can see. At about noon, it is flying! Three times in half an hour it takes off from south to north, into the wind. On the third attempt he flies for fifteen seconds! It cannot seem to get more than about five feet above the water. It is now nearly five months old!

*October 7* One parent has returned and the young one is now constantly whining and pestering the parent for food. What is going on? The parent frequently turns away. We have heard this noise before but now it is much louder and more frequent. Maybe there aren't so many fish? Maybe the young one is using more energy in trying to fly and needs more food?

*October 28* Clear, cool and sunny weather, with a slight wind from the south east. Since we have been away, the temperature has dropped at some point to just below

freezing. The young loon and a parent are still on the lake. The young one is still whimpering, whining, and harassing the parent for food. The parent twice catches a large beak-length fish, but does not share it. The young loon is now staying under water as long as the parent. It is still only about two-thirds the size of the parent.

*October 29* A rosy pink dawn, then sunny and clear with very little wind. The young loon attempts to get airborne again, but is not successful. It still cries a lot when with the parent, and is now attempting to sing a croaky “doh-fah-me” loon song, like a teenage boy whose voice is breaking.

*October 30* The young loon is still trying the “doh-fah-me” call. It is now quite clear in pitch, but the tone is very rough, as though it is being strangled. Maybe it can’t leave until a proper loon call is made? I’m wondering if we’re right in guessing that it’s a male bird, as it seems so insistent on calling.

*November 9* No sign of the loons on the lake . The ice is beginning to form. They must have flown south for the winter. We will be watching for them as soon as the ice begins to leave the lake in the Spring.

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## Volunteers Wanted for the Falcon Watch

*Eve Ticknor*

The annual Falcon Watch will soon be under way. We anticipate the start of our watch to be mid-June and are looking for interested people to help us in monitoring young Peregrine Falcon chicks as they learn to fly. An interest in birds, especially falcons, is welcome. The “work” is not difficult and we give on-the-job training for those new to the watch.

We work in shifts so if you have only have a few hours to spare, it does not matter. We always need people at different times of the day. For more information, contact Eve Ticknor at 737-7551 or by email at [sandbird@magma.ca](mailto:sandbird@magma.ca).

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# Results from the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Taverner Cup Birding Event

*Jeff Harrison*

The 2004 Taverner Cup attracted 43 participants in 12 teams, five competitive and seven recreational. This corporate-sponsored event was held in eastern Ontario and western Québec over a 24-hour period on Saturday May 29.

Participants faced early morning low temperatures in boreal areas but the day turned out mostly sunny with temperatures of about 16 °C in most areas. A steady strong wind from the northwest played havoc with listening for singing birds.

The all-team species total was 218. Birding highlights included Least Bittern, Snow Goose, Tundra Swan, Bald Eagle, Gray Partridge, Yellow Rail, Sandhill Crane,



*Taverner Cup Winners, l - r: Richard Skevington, Jeff Skevington, and presenter David Moore. Missing: Dan Clifflen.*



American Golden Plover, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Stilt, Red-necked Phalarope, Forster's Tern, Black-backed Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, 27 species of warblers (including Palm, Louisiana Waterthrush and Connecticut), Rusty Blackbird and Orchard Oriole.

The "Focus Scientific (Ottawa) Manic Flycatchers," captained by newcomer Jeff Skevington of Ottawa, with fellow birders Richard Skevington of Woodstock, and Dan Clifflen of Brockville, won the Taverner Cup with a total of 164 species. The "Wild Birds Unlimited (Ottawa) Great Gray Owls," captained by Jeff Harrison of Montréal, with fellow birders Roger Taylor of Palgrave and Lance Laviolette of Glen Robertson, placed second with 155. The "Swarovski (Toronto) Cool Chats," captained by Frank Pinilla of Richmond Hill, with fellow birders Norm Murr and Stan Bajurny of Toronto placed third with 145 species.



*Fothergill Trophy Winners, l - r: Chris Ellingwood, Greg Jaski, Tim Brophy, and presenter David Bird.*

The "Cardenals," captained by Chris Ellingwood of Lindsay, Ontario, with fellow birders Tim Brophy of Lindsay and Greg Jaski of Beaverton, won the recreational category, and the Fothergill Trophy, with an excellent total of 141 species. The "Birdbrains," captained by Dave Britton, with fellow birders Jack Rowanow, Colin Gaskell and Bill Murphy, all of Ottawa, placed second with a total of 140 species. They were awarded the Judith Wilks Memorial Trophy. The "Tweachers," captained by Janet Castle, with fellow birders Marylou Kingsbury, Jill and Barry Perkins, all of Ottawa, finished third with a total of 134 species. Last year's Fothergill trophy winner, the "Fenomenal Fledglings," a team of junior birders aged 10 to 16 from Ottawa, placed fourth with an impressive 132 species. A list of all our teams (residences if not mentioned above) and their totals are found below.

About 60 people, including participants, their sponsors, and invited guests, attended the catered Awards Banquet held in Ottawa on Sunday morning May 30. The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (OFNC) and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden hosted the event. David Moore, a Past President of the OFNC, was Master of Ceremonies. He presented Jeff Skevington and his team with the Taverner Cup. Dr. David Bird of McGill University presented the Fothergill Trophy to Chris Ellingwood. Joan Molnar of the "Jaywalkers," a close friend of Judith Wilks, presented the Wilks Trophy to Dave Britton.

The banquet was a big success again this year highlighted by lots of smiling faces, certificates for the winning teams, impromptu speeches, and numerous door prizes.

The full team results were as follows:

#### Competitive:

Sponsor/Team Name	Captain	Total
Focus Scientific Manic Flycatchers	Jeff Skevington	164
Wild Birds Unlimited Great Gray Owls	Jeff Harrison	155
Swarovski Cool Chats	Frank Pinilla	145
PQSPB/ASCC Raven-Loon-A-Ticks	David Bird (Montréal)	144
The Nature Boutique Whisky Jacks	Gerhard Bruins (Orleans)	129

## Recreation:

Team Name	Captain	Total
Cardenals	Chris Ellingwood	141
Birdbrains	Dave Britton	140
Tweachers	Janet Castle	134
Fenomenal Fledglings	Daniele Mitchell	132
The Red-necked Woodpeckers	Jan Thornhill (Havelock)	103
The Motherflickers and Dave	Bev McBride (Ottawa)	94
Jaywalkers	Joan Molnar (Ottawa)	66

The purpose of the Taverner Cup is to raise money for environmental projects and to raise awareness of the great diversity and richness of wildlife habitats in eastern Ontario and western Québec. This year sponsor money went to the operations of the OFNC's Fletcher Wildlife Garden in Ottawa, the Innis Point Bird Observatory, the Province of Québec Society for the Protection of Birds' (PQSPB) Philipsburg Sanctuary, and to the Thickson's Woods Land Trust (Ajax). Additional funds were raised by participants/teams. A hearty thanks to Roger Taylor who raised \$1,000 for the Bruce Trail Association. In addition, the Fenomenal Fledglings raised \$225.00 shared between the Fletcher Wildlife Garden and Innis Point Bird Observatory, and David Bird and Jeff Harrison donated pledge monies from Ken Thorpe, Guillemot Holdings, Montréal to the Philipsburg Sanctuary.

The Baillie Birdathon has proven to be a huge success at raising money through pledges for the excellent work of Bird Studies Canada. It is hoped that the Taverner Cup Birding Event will eventually become a vehicle for the many needy environmental organizations such as Wildlife Gardens, Sanctuaries, Bird Care Centres, Conservation Areas, Land Trusts, Friends of Parks etc. to raise money specifically for their worthwhile projects.

The Taverner Cup boundary includes the cities of Montréal, Ottawa and Gatineau and lies just east of Metropolitan Toronto. These cities contain three of the four largest urban populations in Canada. This very accessible, but under-birded part of Ontario/Québec, has an outstanding range of habitats and migrant traps, and combined with its geographical location makes it one of the best, if not the best, year-around birding area in Canada.

The coordinator offers a special thanks to all our faithful corporate sponsors and

participating birders whose continued support is making the Taverner Cup a successful birding and fund-raising event. Thanks to our many volunteers, especially Greg Kelly and Susan Barnabe (Compilation and Banquet), Christine Hanrahan (Banquet), Ron Scovell, Toronto (T-shirt graphics). Bob Young (photography) and David Moore. Finally, many thanks to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for providing our attractive banquet facilities, Joe Dafoe of The Nature Boutique for arranging prizes, and Sandra Garland, OFNC webmaster, for maintaining our website. Patronage of our many loyal sponsors would be very much appreciated.

Next year the Taverner Cup will take place on Saturday May 28. Whether you are a hard core birder or a rank beginner, if you looking for a way to raise money for your environmental project, I would be happy to talk to you about getting involved with the Taverner!

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## Publications Received from Other Organizations

*Ron Bedford*

Each year the OFNC received a number of publications comparable in scope to our *T&L* from other field naturalist clubs and organizations. While most of the articles in these publications are of interest primarily to their own members, some may also be of interest to OFNC members. All of these reports are retained for a period of one year at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre and may be reviewed by OFNC members at that location. The current list of these publications are as follows:

- Nature Canada (Nature Canada)
- The Blue Bill (Kingston)
- Toronto Field Naturalist
- Whip-Poor-Will (Mississippi Valley)
- Quatre Temps (Montreal Botanical Garden)
- Nature Scene (Canadian Museum of Nature)
- Catherine Traill Newsletter (St Anne de Bellevue)
- The Quinte Naturalist (Belleville)
- The Wood Duck (Hamilton)
- Nature News (Vankleek Hill)
- Pica (Calgary)
- Field Naturalist (Trinidad)



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# Early Winter Bird Sightings

## 1 November 2004 - 1 February 2005

*Chris Lewis*

Winter came early to Ottawa-Gatineau in 2004. After the usual mixed bag of November weather, a snowstorm on 1 December sealed our fate. . . winter had arrived. The local Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were endured under very cold, windy and snowy conditions, and not surprisingly no significant records were set for species or numbers. Despite the weather, this winter will be remembered for one event above all others. . . a major invasion of **GREAT GRAY OWLS**, the largest in eastern Ontario and the Outaouais in at least two decades and perhaps a century.

### **RARITIES**

Apart from the "Great Gray Invasion," a few nice rarities dropped in to our area. An adult **ROSS'S GOOSE**, *the 7<sup>th</sup> RECORD FOR THE 50 Km radius*, was enjoyed by many birders while it rested in a pond south of Reid's Mills from 21 - 26 November. **BOREAL OWLS** appeared at three disparate locations: Constance Bay (12 December), Pakenham (26 December) and Nepean (15 January). **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS** were also notable this season—a female was a regular visitor to a feeding station south of Manotick from at least 1 December through the end of the period, a male was at another feeder immediately across the Rideau River from 6 December until 6 January, and a pair was reported from Gatineau (Aylmer), Québec from 10 November until at least 3 January. Individual **TUFTED TITMICE** came to feeders in Hallville (the entire month of November) and to the Almonte area (11-27 November). A **VARIED THRUSH** was found dead after it apparently struck a window in Nepean on or about 21 December; unfortunately, it was evidently never seen alive. And last but not least, a *3<sup>rd</sup> RECORD FOR OTTAWA*—a **SUMMER TANAGER** visited a suet feeder in Nepean from 10 - 15 November.

### **LOONS, GREBS & HERONS**

Early November was notable for **Red-throated Loons**, especially at Shirleys Bay, where several groups of 5 - 7 were observed in flight, and where one lingered until at least 14 November. Additional reports came from Constance Bay, 14 - 16 November.

Small numbers of **Horned and Red-necked Grebes** could be found on the Ottawa River at Shirleys Bay and Andrew Haydon Park into mid-November and a very late **Red-necked Grebe** was still present for the Ottawa-Gatineau CBC on 19 December. An extremely late **Green Heron**, *the latest ever for the 50km* was seen in Gatineau Park behind the Relais Plein-Air entrance on 1 December.

## **WATERFOWL**

From 8 - 11 November, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** was on the Ottawa River at Constance Bay. An adult **ROSS'S GOOSE** was a highlight from 21 - 26 November while it hung out with a flock of 130 **Snow Geese** and approx. 1000 Canada Geese at a small farm pond south of Reid's Mills. The large flock of 230+ **Snow Geese** that spent several weeks at a large pond on Moodie Dr. south of the Trail Road Landfill since mid-October gradually dwindled to approx. 165 birds by 21 November. . . and then to none the following week. Two **Cackling Geese** were among the large **Canada Goose** congregation at this pond from 7 - 14 November. Other reports of Cackling Geese came from Andrew Haydon Park (10 -15 November), with up to nine birds seen here on one day, as well as lesser numbers at Reids Mills and Mooneys Bay later in the month. The Canadas really left the building after winter's early and decisive strike—only 10 were found on the Ottawa-Gatineau CBC and a pair was still at Remic Rapids, feeding along the icy river edge on 9 January. A small number of **Brant** moved through rather quickly in early November.

November was, as usual, a good month for duck viewing, with a few lingerers such as a **Blue-winged Teal** at Constance Bay (1 November), and a single female **Readhead** and **Ruddy Duck** at the Moodie Dr. pond (14 and 21 November respectively). In December, a male **Wood Duck** was found (no surprise) on the Rideau River behind the Rideau Tennis Club on 19 December and remained through the rest of the period. A male **Bufflehead** and a **Long-tailed Duck** were still on the Ottawa River, at Deschênes rapids (3 January) and Remic rapids (15 January) respectively. Other species that were well represented but in small numbers until the third week of November included **Greater and Lesser Scaup** and all three species of scoters and mergansers. **Common Goldeneye** numbers began to increase dramatically in the first week of November, and a record high of 799 birds were counted on the Ottawa-Gatineau CBC on 19 December. Typical of most Ottawa winters, several **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were found at two principal sites—Remic Rapids and the Rideau River near the Tennis Club, and two males were still present as of at least 25 January.

## **RAPTORS**

Accipiters and buteos were in short supply for most of the season, although a very

interesting bird was a rare **dark morph Red-tailed Hawk** that wintered at the Gatineau Airport, certainly the same bird that spent the winter as a juvenile last winter (2003-2004) in the same location. **Merlins** once again outnumbered **American Kestrels**, and at least one adult **Peregrine Falcon** was seen at the Civic Hospital (22 December) and at Tunney's Pasture (1 January). Early in the period, **Bald Eagles** were observed at Buckham's Bay, Constance Bay and Petrie Island (November - December) and later in January a few Bald Eagles were seen in the Steele Rd. / Eardley-Masham Rd. and Lac Lablanche areas of Québec along with a single **Golden Eagle**.

## **GALLINACEOUS BIRDS & RAILS**

Very few **Gray Partridges** were reported during the period, reflecting the continuing dramatic decline of this species over the last two decades. Small coveys were noted from Kinburn Side Rd. at Hwy 417 (early December), Woodkilton Rd. east of Kinburn Side Rd. (16 January), Terry Fox Dr. in Kanata (24 January), and the corner of Moodie and Brophy Drs. (30 January and onward). **Wild Turkeys**, on the other hand, have been proliferating all over the region! Back in early December, 93 turkeys were counted on a single day in the Carp area, and flocks of various sizes were reported from Earl Armstrong Rd. south of the International Airport and March Valley Dr. in Kanata.

The annual fall gathering of **Sandhill Cranes** in the cornfields along Milton Rd. adjacent to the Mer Bleue bog was witnessed again, with a high count of 24 birds on 8 November.

## **SHOREBIRDS**

Late for the Ottawa area were **Black-bellied Plover**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Sanderling** and **White-rumped Sandpiper**—individuals lingered along the river at Andrew Haydon Park into the first week of November. A flock of approx. 100 **Dunlin** flew east down the river at Constance Bay on 7 November, and a single **Dunlin** was still at the east end of Andrew Haydon Park on 1 December. For nearly the sixth consecutive winter (minus one year), a **Wilson's Snipe** was found on the Ottawa-Gatineau CBC, and was still present on 20 December. . .in *exactly* the same location where snipes have attempted to overwinter in previous years—a warm-water drainage ditch between the National Research Council (NRC) and Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) buildings at Montreal and Blair Rds.

## **GULLS**

The Winchester sewage lagoons hosted nine very late **Bonaparte's Gulls** on 14 November. Other reports of interest included a **Thayer's Gull** at Andrew Haydon Park on 8 November, and several Lesser **Black-backed Gulls** in the vicinity of the



Trail Road Landfill during the early part of that month. Single **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were also found at Billings Bridge on 19 December and at the Trail Road Landfill on 24 January. **Iceland Gulls** appeared in typically low numbers, but approx. 50 **Glaucous Gulls** seen on 3 January on the Ottawa River above both the Deschênes and Remic rapids was a good count for the start of the New Year.

## OWLS

Beginning with a **Northern Hawk Owl** and two **Great Gray Owls** in Gatineau Park on 27 November, this winter was truly a phenomenal one for owls in our region. The Hawk Owl remained here until at least 31 January and another was found in the Mer Bleue area on 19 December but did not stay. **Snowy Owls** began to appear in the third week of November, east of Ottawa at St-Isidore, as well as on the Ottawa River at Dick Bell Park. The Ste-Rose area east of Casselman hosted five Snowys on Christmas Day, and two were at Earl Armstrong Road south of the International Airport (4 December - 3 January). By the end of January, at least five were reported along Eagleson, Fallowfield and Akins Roads, including one spectacular white male.

There was no shortage of **Barred Owl** sightings from late December through the first week of January, with individuals reported from Vincent Massey Park, as well as several locations in the Carp, Dunrobin and Kanata areas. Two **Short-eared Owls** were reported from Brophy Dr. near Twin Elm on 12 December, and another was at the traditional "S-curve" along Earl Armstrong Rd. as late as 18 December.

Three nice little surprise-packages came in the form of **BOREAL OWLS**. . . One was exposed by Blue Jays and chickadees in Constance Bay on 12 December. Another was observed feeding on a Mourning Dove in a field along Ivy Acres Rd. near Pakenham on 26 December. And one spent the entire day of 15 December literally sitting on a bird feeder in a backyard in Nepean. None of these owls were subsequently seen.

And the best has been saved for last. . . the **GREAT GRAY OWL** "invasion," THE LARGEST INTO THE REGION IN AT LEAST 20 YEARS, POSSIBLY EVEN A CENTURY! It is impossible to give the exact number of Great Grays that began irrupting into the Ottawa-Gatineau area in late November, and the locations from which they were reported are too numerous to be represented in this article. However, sightings came from all manner of places, from rural fields and ski trails to suburban parks and backyards. The highest concentration was localized to the west of the city, especially the Dunrobin / Woodlawn / Kilmaurs area. Several were also consistently seen at Shirleys Bay and March Valley Dr., and others began to appear in peripheral locations to the north, east and south as the season progressed. A rough estimate of Great Grays in our region would likely be between 80 - 100 birds during this period.



## KINGFISHERS & WOODPECKERS

A lone, late and very lost **Belted Kingfisher** was a New Year's Day surprise at March Rd. and Carling Ave.

A woodpecker that was also out-of-season was a **Northern Flicker** in Ottawa South on 30 January. Some of the rarer species included two of the southern variety, which were not hard to find, but the northern fellows were quite elusive. At least two adult **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were faithful to the old burn site in Constance Bay, where this species has nested now for at least three consecutive years. One, and sometimes both, of these birds were still being seen in the woods as well as at a nearby suet feeder until the end of the period. **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS** also demonstrated fidelity to feeders at two farms south of Manotick from early December until at least the third week of January. Interesting that these birds, a male and a female, chose to dine at separate feeders almost directly across the Rideau River from one another, whereas another pair fed together in Gatineau (Aylmer) into early January.

Just like the previous fall and winter, both **American Three-toed** and **Black-backed Woodpeckers** were "lucky-to-see" birds. A pair of Black-backed were seen along a trail off Kerwin Rd. west of Kanata on 7 November; a Black-backed and an American Three-toed were in the same location on the 12 November. Additional observations included another American Three-toed in the Larose Forest on 27 and 29 December, and single Black-backed Woodpeckers in both the Eardley-Masham and Lac Lablanche areas of Québec later in January.

## PASSERINES

A few rarities brightened an otherwise grim season, most of them at bird feeders. Individual **TUFTED TITMICE** visited feeders in Hallville south of Ottawa for the entire month of November, and the Almonte area from at least 11 - 27 December. Another southern species was the **Carolina Wren**, with one briefly gracing a feeder in Alta Vista (2 - 4 November), and another at a feeder in Gatineau (Chelsea) until 19 December. An abnormally mild (+10 °C) day on 13 January prompted a male Carolina Wren to sing in the Rothwell Heights neighbourhood. . .and then we were plunged into the deep freeze the next day.

An unfortunate incident involved a **VARIED THRUSH** which was found dead after evidently striking a window on or about 21 December. The bird was only reported posthumously—who knows how long it was in the neighbourhood (Crestview area, Nepean) before its untimely demise?

**Bohemian Waxwings** were reported from the Carp and Dunrobin areas, but not in any significant numbers. A "baker's dozen" of **Cedar Waxwings** (unusual in

Ottawa in winter) showed up at Shirleys Bay on 15 January, and approx. 20 were seen in the Eardley-Masham area on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-rumped Warblers** have been known to linger into winter, and one was discovered along the Rideau River behind the RCMP headquarters on 19 December. More interesting was the *latest Ottawa record ever* of a **Black-and-White Warbler**, found in the Britannia woods on 28 November.

Another feeder highlight was the **3<sup>rd</sup> OTTAWA RECORD** of a **SUMMER TANAGER**. A female gorged herself on suet for five days in November. The property owner reported that the bird disappeared after the 15<sup>th</sup>.

A Carleton Place feeder hosted a female **Eastern Towhee** from mid-December until at least the 27 December. Otherwise, the sparrows really cleared out after the cold weather hit, with only one **White-throated Sparrow** found on the Ottawa-Gatineau CBC, and none reported after that. A **Fox Sparrow** spent approx. three weeks at a feeder in Manotick into mid-November, and single **Song Sparrows** were found near the NRC building on Montreal Rd. (2 January) and at a feeder in Nepean (17 and 18 January). Three **Lapland Longspurs** were among a flock of 160 **Snow Buntings** in a manure spread along Old Coach Road south of Carp on 5 December.

The beginning of November seemed promising for "winter finches", with several **Pine Grosbeaks**, **White-winged Crossbills**, **Common Redpolls**, **Pine Siskins** and **Evening Grosbeaks** noted in various locations. Reports of **Red Crossbills** (a single bird in the Torbolton Forest, Constance Bay on 16 November, and a pair farther afield in the Calabogie Peaks area on 15 January) were also interesting. But most of these birds were transients, with only small numbers of **Common Redpolls** deciding to stick around. . .except in the northwest and northeast reaches of the 50km, where multiple **Pine Grosbeaks**, **White-winged Crossbills** and **Pine Siskins** were observed in late January. Single **Hoary Redpolls** were found on the Ottawa-Gatineau and Dunrobin-Breckenridge CBCs.

A roller-coaster season of brutally cold days punctuated by mild spells, snowstorms, ice storms and everything in between, finally ended in a typical January deep-freeze. It makes one wonder how the creatures that have no choice but to live and find food outdoors survive such conditions. At times like these, bird feeders are welcome places for all sorts of animals, not just birds. Sincere thanks go out to all the people who not only provide the food, but who also generously welcome birders onto their properties, and into their homes, to view some of the more unusual avian visitors. It is hoped that birders are respectful and appreciative of such privileges.

### Acknowledgements

The bird sightings mentioned in this article are attributed to the many reports to the OFNC Bird Status Line (BSL) as well as personal communications. Some information was also gleaned from postings to the Ontario Field Ornithologists' (OFO) listserve, ONTBIRDS. Thank you to everyone who shared information. To report local bird sightings as well as hear weekly summaries and rare bird sightings for the Ottawa area, please call (613) 860-9000 and follow the instructions. The weekly BSL summaries are also posted on ONTBIRDS and the OFNC web site. An excellent directory to great birding locations in the National Capital region, and a wealth of other information about birding and links to other sites can be found at [www.ofnc.ca](http://www.ofnc.ca).

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## Keys to the Kingdoms: a Taxonomy Institute for 2005

Presented by the Canadian Biodiversity Institute in partnership with the Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum

Most of these workshops will be held over a weekend, Saturday and Sunday, usually from 9:30 - 4:30 p.m. with a lunch provided for all participants. The workshops are designed for amateur naturalists as well as professional biologists, ecologists, educators, and park interpreters (adults and youth over 12). Resource materials will be provided as part of the workshop.

Because of space considerations and availability of suitable microscopes, registration is limited to 10 participants per workshop, but we need a minimum of five registrants to make the workshop viable. Please reserve early to avoid cancellations of workshops. Registrations will be accepted up to one week before the workshop date.

All workshops are \$150. Members of the EOBM are entitled to a 20 % discount. Non-member participants who register for more than one workshop will get a 20 % discount on additional workshops. Partial refunds are available under certain circumstances.

**Lichen Workshop (Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum)**

**April 9 - 10, Sat & Sun, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Teacher: Dr. Irwin (Ernie) Brodo, author of "Lichens of North America" and "Lichens of the Ottawa Region."

Illustrated lectures will introduce the morphological features and ecology of lichens

that are important for identification. Local field work will emphasize lichen habitats and collecting techniques followed by laboratory work (microscope for each participant provided) devoted to understanding lichen terminology, interpreting characters and learning to use identification keys. Participants will receive "Lichens of the Ottawa Region."

#### **Field Identification of Birds Workshop**

**May 14 - 15, Sat. 9:30 a.m. - 4:40 p.m. & Sun 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Teachers: Monty Brigham, one of Canada's foremost experts on audio recording and identification of bird sounds.

Stew Hamill, wildlife biologist, currently a coordinator with the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas and involved in many other birding projects.

This workshop, at the peak time for spring migration, will focus on field identification of birds using both sound and visual clues. Participants will learn to recognize and understand the significance of various bird calls and songs from the master, Monty Brigham, with help from his many recordings of bird sounds. Both Monty and Stew will focus on visual clues to bird identification and to interpret bird behaviour. For those wishing to progress quickly in birding skills, this is a not-to-be-missed opportunity.

#### **Bryology (Mosses and Liverworts) Workshop**

**May 28 - 29, Sat. & Sun, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Teacher: Linda Ley, specialist formerly with the Botany Division (Bryology Section) Canadian Museum of Nature.

Participants in this workshop will be introduced to moss and liverwort terminology and the use of keys for identification to the more common families and genera of our local mosses. A short field trip component will show students where to look for mosses, how to collect them, and clues for recognizing our common species in the field.

#### **Odonata (Damselflies & Dragonflies) Workshop**

**June 4 - 5 Sat & Sun, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Teacher: Raymond Hutchinson, author of "Manuel d'identification des libellules du Québec" and experienced teacher.

The emphasis will be on identifying both the adult and immature Damselflies and Dragonflies. One day will be devoted to the immatures and the other to the adults. Local field work will emphasize habitats, collecting and rearing techniques followed by laboratory work devoted to understanding the necessary terminology, interpreting characters and learning to use identification keys.



### **Flowering Plants Workshop**

**June 11 - 12 Sat & Sun, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Teacher: Albert Dugal, retired botany collections specialist and current active consultant in botanical matters to the Canadian Museum of Nature.

This workshop will focus on the major plant families in this part of Ontario including Rosaceae, Poaceae, Cyperaceae, Compositae, etc. Albert will lead a field trip to collect specimens for identification and we shall make use of the EOBM Herbarium. Participants will receive several handouts showing features employed in identifying plants and interpreting botanical terminology.

### **Lepidoptera (Butterflies & Moths) Workshop**

**June 18, Sat., 9:30 a.m. - midnight.**

Teacher: Dr. Don Lafontaine, Research Scientist, Agriculture & Agri-Foods Canada, co-author of "Butterflies of Canada" and leading authority on Noctuid Moths.

Don will begin this long-day workshop by illustrating important features, both morphological and behavioural, distinguishing our common families of butterflies and moths. Participants will learn the appropriate terminology to make use of identification keys and will get practice with the use of museum specimens. We shall break for supper (provided) and further discussion before heading to a local garden near the Rideau River (at approximately 9:30 p.m.) where we will set up a mercury vapour lamp and a sheet for studying the moths that come to lights. Weather permitting, we may stay as late as midnight to sample the fantastic nightlife and to learn how to recognize the major groups by their behavioural traits.

### **Entomology Workshop (Insects)**

**June 25 - 26, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Teacher: Dr. Henri Goulet, Research Scientist, Agriculture & Agri-Foods Canada, leading authority on Sawflies, Tiger Beetles, and digital photography of insects.

This workshop will introduce participants to the major orders and families of eastern Ontario insects through illustrated lectures, and to the terminology to understand and use keys for their identification. Henri will take participants into the field to sample the dazzling abundance and variety of local insect life virtually under one's nose. He will also demonstrate his successful techniques for insect photography. Laboratory time will be devoted to working with both museum and newly caught specimens. Each participant will receive a copy of "Insects of Algonquin Provincial Park," a beautifully illustrated publication.

To register, please contact workshop coordinator, Fenja Brodo, at 723-2054, [fbrodo@sympatico.ca](mailto:fbrodo@sympatico.ca), or Heather Hamilton, at 258-3415 or 826-2190, [admin@eobm.ca](mailto:admin@eobm.ca).

Registrations can be done by phone with payment by VISA.

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# Coming Events

arranged by the Excursions & Lectures Committee.

For further information,  
call the Club number (722-3050).

*Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader. Restricted trips will be open to non-members only after the indicated deadlines.*

**ALL OUTINGS:** *Please bring a lunch on full-day trips and dress according to the weather forecast and activity. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes are essential on all birding trips. Unless otherwise stated, transportation will be by car pool.*

**REGISTERED BUS TRIPS:** *Make your reservation for Club bus excursions by sending a cheque or money order (Payable to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) to Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ottawa, Ontario, K1Z 1A2, at least ten days in advance. Include your name, address, telephone number and the name of the outing. Your cooperation is appreciated by the Committee so that we do not have to wait to the last moment to decide whether a trip should be cancelled due to low registration. In order for the Club to offer a bus trip, we need just over 33 people to register. If fewer than 30 register, we have the option of cancelling the trip or increasing the cost. Such decisions must be done a week in advance so we encourage anyone who is interested in any bus trip to register as early as possible. We also wish to discourage postponing the actual payment of bus fees until the day of the event.*

**EVENTS AT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE:** *The Club is grateful to the Museum for their cooperation, and thanks the Museum for the use of these excellent facilities.*

**BIRD STATUS LINE:** *Phone 860-9000 to learn of recent sightings or birding potential in the Ottawa area. To report recent sightings use the 860-9000 number and stay on the line. This service is run on behalf of the Birds Committee and is available to members and non-members.*

Sunday  
10 April  
9:00 a.m.  
to  
12:30 p.m.

## WINTER PLANTS

Leader: Albert Dugal

Meet : Giant Tiger parking lot, northeast corner of Blossom Park Shopping Centre, west side of Banks St., 2.2 km past Hunt Club Road. The last street before the shopping centre is Queensdale St.

This will be an excellent opportunity to identify trees and shrubs when the leaves are no longer available. We will explore the huge variety of trees, some over 200 years old, in the NCC-owned Mediola woods (Emerald Woods) and surrounding fields. The outing is limited to the first 20 people to register with the Club number (722-3050) by April 4.

Tuesday  
12 April  
7:00 p.m.  
Social & Club  
business

## OFNC MONTHLY MEETING

**SEX AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE: problems of upset reproduction and development in fish and frogs exposed to hormone-mimicking pollution.**

Speaker: Dr. Vance Trudeau

Meet: Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

7:30 p.m.  
Speaker

There is widespread contamination of waterways with industrial chemicals and also pharmaceuticals from sewage effluents that are causing problems for wildlife. The best described examples are estrogenic pollutants that alter sexual development in fish and frogs. In this talk, Dr. Trudeau will outline the general biology of reproductive and developmental hormones, discuss the scope of the contamination problem, and effects researchers are finding. These are not isolated studies or events, but a serious problem, often referred to as "endocrine disruption."

**Wednesday**  
**13 April**  
**7:00 a.m.**

**SPRING BIRDING EAST OF OTTAWA ALONG THE  
FLOODPLAINS OF BEAR BROOK AND THE  
SOUTH NATION RIVER**

**Leader:** Bruce Di Labio

**Meet:** Elmvale Acres Shopping Centre, northwest corner of the parking lot at the junction of St. Laurent Boulevard and Smyth Road. Cars may be left at St. Aiden's Church nearby. This is a midweek trip 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to view ducks, geese and other waterbirds. We will also be looking for spring migrants and migrating hawks. Remember to bring a snack and dress for the weather. Please register at the Club number (722-3050) so that participants may be informed if alternate arrangements have to be made.

**Tuesday**  
**19 April**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**to**  
**8:30 p.m.**

**WILDLIFE AWARDS AND SILENT AUCTION**

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature,  
Metcalf and McLeod Streets.

Come celebrate the winners of the 2005 Awards for Environmental Excellence and enjoy well-known guest speaker Tony Beck, who will talk about special wild places. You can also bid on some great nature-themed products. Tickets are only \$5 and include light refreshments. This event is sponsored by the Ottawa Wildlife Festival, of which the OFNC is a participant. Please contact Christine at [vanessa@magma.ca](mailto:vanessa@magma.ca) or 728-6953 for information and tickets.

**Sunday**  
**24 April**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**SPRING AT CONSTANCE BAY**

**Leader:** Jeff Skevington and Phil Jeffreys

**Meet:** Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Rd. at Assaly Rd.

Phil will meet participants at Lincoln Fields to car pool out to Constance Bay (30 minutes west of town), or call Jeff (832-1970) for the more westerly meeting place. On this half-day trip we will focus on birds but we shall enjoy anything that gives us a hint that spring is on its way. We shall explore the waterfront and some of the trails. Waterfowl, raptors and a good variety of early spring passerines should be on the move.



**Wednesday**

**27 April**

**6:00 p.m.**

**to**

**10:00 p.m.**

### **PROTECTING WILD PLACES**

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

A panel of speakers will look at ways in which the public can engage in protecting wild places, both large and small. Come and discover what a Biosphere Reserve is, how to set up a Land Trust, and how individuals have worked alone and together to preserve and protect very special wild places. There will be information tables, displays, handouts, and free refreshments. Admission is free. This event is sponsored by the Ottawa Wildlife Festival of which the OFNC is a participant. Please contact Christine at [vanessa@magma.ca](mailto:vanessa@magma.ca) or 728-6953 for information.

**Saturday**

**30 April**

**7:30 p.m.**

### **OFNC SOIRÉE**

**Meet:** St. Basil's Church, Off Maitland, just north of the Queensway.

Come for an evening of fun and celebration at our annual Club event. You will be able to talk with many Club members, meet some Macoun members and see lots of fine art and photography. You will also have an opportunity to meet this year's award winners. Tickets can be reserved in advance by calling the Club number or may be purchased at the door the night of the soirée. See the insert in the previous issue for further details.

For more information call Marilyn Ward at our Club number 722-3050, or for information regarding displays call Phil Jeffreys 721-0139.

**Saturday**

**7 May**

**9:00 a.m.**

**to**

**4:30 p.m.**

**(10:30 a.m. at North  
Augusta)**

### **LIMERICK FOREST TRIP**

**Leader:** Stew Hamill (at Limerick Forest); Fenja Brodo (at Lincoln Fields).

**Meet:** Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Rd. at Assaly Rd., (or 10:30 a.m. at the post office in North Augusta.)

In celebration of National Forest Week, the Limerick Forest Advisory Committee invites OFNC members to explore a potential old growth stand in Limerick Forest, near North Augusta. The destination is Limerick 85d, a conifer stand which is over 110 years in age. It contains White Cedar and Hemlock and was assessed as quality 1 potential old growth. Both Red-shouldered Hawk and Winter Wren were noted during a site visit in 2003. There is a short access trail which is not wet, but may be muddy. After the hike, the vehicle tour will continue to the Limerick Forest Chalet, stopping at Kemptville Creek on the way to look for waterfowl. We will eat lunch at the Chalet, where washrooms are available. After lunch, another short hike (or a drive if preferable) will take us to the Limerick Forest boardwalk leading into a marsh. Leave for home at 3:00 to arrive at Lincoln Fields at 4:30 p.m. Bring: lunch, drinks, binoculars, field guides, clothing suited for hiking, with rain gear if rain is forecast.

**Tuesday**

**10 May**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Social & Club  
business**

### **OFNC MONTHLY MEETING**

#### **ARCTIC HARES**

**Speaker:** David Gray

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets.

Dr. David Gray will present an illustrated talk on his research on the behaviour of the Arctic hare on Ellesmere Island, and on his experiences during recent trips to Rankin Inlet and Newfoundland in preparation for a new virtual museum exhibit on the Arctic hare.

**7:30 p.m.**

**Speaker**

### **MAY EVENING STROLLS**

These three informal walks are offered to expand members' general knowledge of local natural history. Children are most welcome on these outings. Bring waterproof footwear and insect repellent

**Thursday**  
**12 May**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**BRITANNIA WOODS CONSERVATION AREA**  
**Leader:** Dave Moore  
**Meet:** Entrance gate to the Britannia Filtration Plant on Cassels Rd.

**Tuesday**  
**17 May**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**STONY SWAMP**  
**Leader:** Connie Clark  
**Meet:** Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Rd. at Assaly Rd.  
We will proceed to Parking Lot 8 at Stoney Swamp Beaver Trail off Moodie Drive, south of West Hunt Club Road. Outside washrooms are available. The trail paths are wide and well groomed. This is bug season so do bring insect repellent, a hat and water proof footwear

**Wednesday**  
**25 May**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN**  
**Leader:** Frank Pope  
**Meet:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden Parking lot, east side of Prince of Wales Drive, south of the traffic circle. Map at <http://home.achilles.net/ofnc/fletcher/location.php3>.

**Saturday**  
**14 May**  
**10:00 a.m.**  
**to**  
**12 noon**

**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY**  
**Location:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden  
Spring migration is underway and how better to celebrate than with guided tours around the garden. Join us to celebrate the return of migratory birds with tours, displays, and handouts about various aspects of bird conservation. Free refreshments. For more information contact Christine at [vanessa@magma.ca](mailto:vanessa@magma.ca), 728-6953.

**Sunday**  
**15 May**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**SPRING RAMBLE AT THE MILL OF KINTAIL**  
**Leader:** Connie Clark  
**Meet:** Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Rd. at Assaly Rd.  
In the spring, the ephemeral flowers burst forth quickly and die quickly. Come and catch the fleeting gala of spring wild flowers. Breathe the fresh air, smell the fresh earth, and take a minute to marvel at nature's music—birdsong. We may catch a glimpse of a Mourning Cloak butterfly or a newly emerging garter snake. Insect repellent is a good thing to have along. A hat, waterproof footwear, binoculars, and a lunch are also advisable. Carpe Diem - Seize the day. Life is fleeting!

**Thursday**  
**19 May**  
**to**  
**Sunday**  
**22 May**  
**2005**

### **POINTE PELEE NATIONAL PARK**

The Club's bi-annual trip to Pointe Pelee and Rondeau Parks will take place during the spring bird migration.

This is the last call for our Club's bi-annual bus trip to Pointe Pelee and Rondeau Parks during the spring bird migration. There is room for just a few more participants. Please call the Club number at 722-3050 if interested.

**Saturday**  
**28 May**  
**to Sunday**  
**29 May**

### **24 HOUR TAVERNER CUP BIRDING COMPETITION**

Experienced birders and bird enthusiasts are invited to participate in this event. See page 94 of this issue for information about the event. Interested participants should contact Jeff Harrison at [dha@videotron.ca](mailto:dha@videotron.ca) or [www.net.com/taverner/](http://www.net.com/taverner/).

**Saturday**  
**4 June**  
**9:00 a.m.**  
**to**  
**12:30 p.m.**

### **FWG NATIVE PLANT SALE**

**Location:** Fletcher Wildlife Garden

This annual fund raiser is a good opportunity to learn more about native plant gardening, ask questions, get advice and buy plants not often found in local nurseries. Donations of native plants and seeds are always welcome (species native to eastern Ontario only). Please bring them to the FWG any Friday morning or call us at 730-0714; we would be happy to pick them up from you.

**Sunday**  
**12 June**  
**9:00 a.m.**

### **A STROLL THROUGH MER BLEUE BOG**

**Leader:** Connie Clark

**Meet:** Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre, northeast corner of the parking lot, Richmond Rd. at Assaly Rd.

A 1.2 km boardwalk allows us to walk over a bed of vegetation that floats in cold acidic oxygenless water. This water was left behind 8,000 years ago. We also pass through a swamp area, home for some birds, fish and mammals. The trails are well kept. Washroom available at the parking lot. Bring along a snack or lunch, binoculars, a magnifying glass and insect repellent.



Tuesday  
14 June  
7:00 p.m.  
Social & Club  
business

**OFNC MONTHLY MEETING  
COMMUNICATION IN BUTTERFLIES AND  
CATERPILLARS**

**Meet:** Auditorium, Canadian Museum of Nature, Metcalfe  
and McLeod Streets.

**Speaker:** Jayne Yack

Caterpillars and butterflies are insects generally thought to lack an acoustic sense. Recent evidence demonstrates that several butterfly species possess well-developed ears on their wings, and use their hearing for predator detection and conspecific communication. We are also discovering that acoustic communication (using airborne and substrate-borne signals) is probably widespread in caterpillars for purposes of defense and social interactions. Jayne will talk about research in her lab on the acoustic systems of two butterfly superfamilies, Hedyloidea and Papilionoidea (Swallowtails), and the caterpillars of two moth groups, the Drepanoidea (Hook tip moths) and Bombycoidea (Hawk and Silk moths).

7:30 p.m.  
Speaker

Sunday  
10 July  
8:50 a.m.

**JOIN MEMBERS OF DRAGONFLY SOCIETY OF  
AMERICA TO EXPLORE LOCAL DRAGONFLY  
AND DAMSELFLY DIVERSITY.**

**Leaders:** Experts from across North America

**Meet:** at the Arnprior Quality Inn (70 Madawaska Blvd.,  
# 27 on the website "townmap" <http://www.arnprior.ca>  
Click on "community" for the map).

This is a fantastic one-time opportunity for OFNC members to join in on Dragonfly Society of America outings. You will have a choice of joining any one of several groups that are exploring different area wetlands for dragonflies and damselflies. These are all-day outings so bring a lunch and be prepared for wading in wet environments. Please register at the Club number (722-3050). If you have any questions about what to expect from the day, call Jeff Skevington at 832-1970.

**DEADLINE:** *Material intended for the April - June issue must be in the editor's hands by May 1, 2005. Mail your manuscripts to: Karen McLachlan Hamilton, 2980 Moodie Drive, Nepean, ON, K2J 4S7, H: (613) 838-4943 email: [hamilton@storm.ca](mailto:hamilton@storm.ca).*

**ANY ARTICLES FOR TRAIL & LANDSCAPE?**

Have you been on an interesting field trip or made some unusual observations recently? Write up your thoughts and send them to Trail & Landscape. We accept email, diskettes and CDs, or submissions in traditional form- typed, written, or printed.

URL of our site:  
[www.ofnc.ca](http://www.ofnc.ca)

WEBMASTER's email  
[webmaster@ofnc.ca](mailto:webmaster@ofnc.ca)

ISSN 0041-0748



## TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

Published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

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